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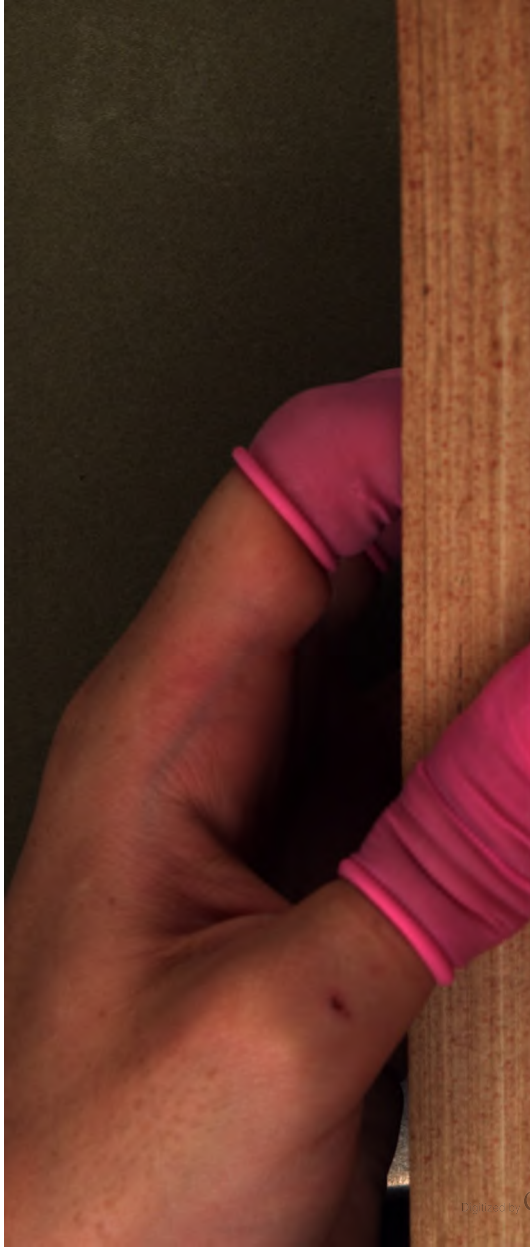
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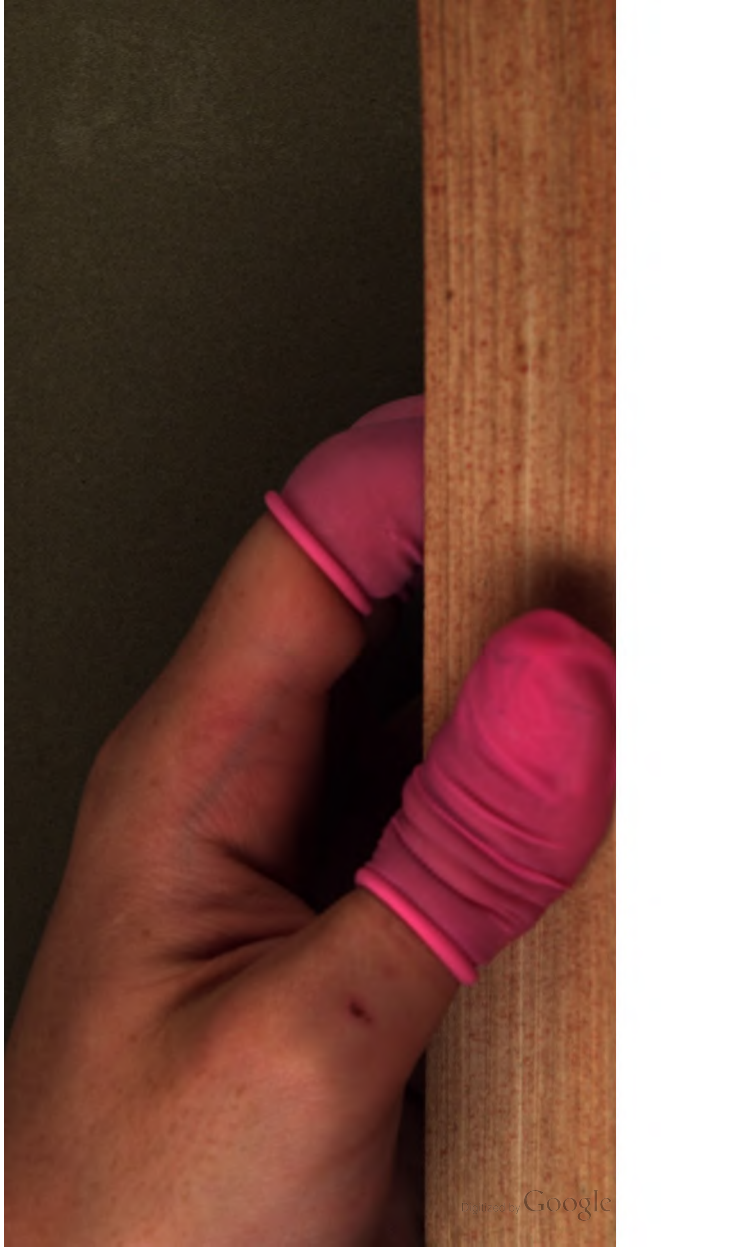
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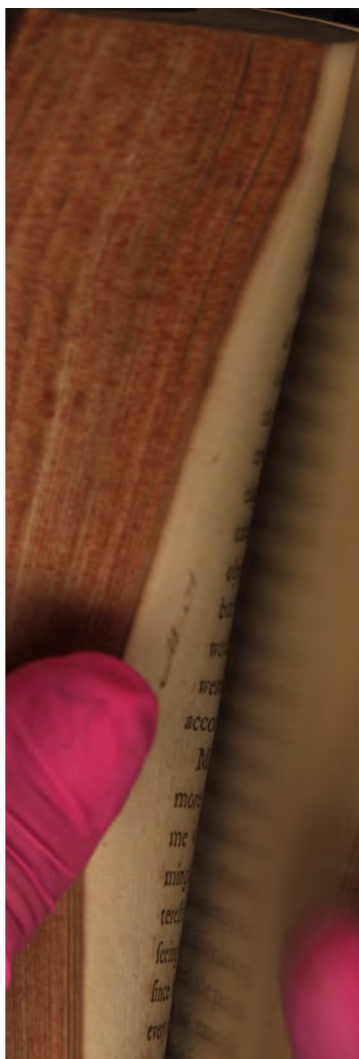
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HENRY AND ISABELLA;

OR, A

T R A I T E

THROUGH

L I F E.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
CAROLINE, OR THE DIVERSITIES OF FORTUNE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

V O L. III.



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HENRY AND ISABELLA.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE ASSIGNATION.

THE following morning Juliana arose with more than common cheerfulness, and prepared for her visit to the bathing house. She was at the seat in the park, where Lady Frances had appointed her to meet her woman, some minutes before she appeared to conduct her; during which time she felt so much impatience, that a stranger who had observed her, would have guessed the assignation to have been of a very different nature. At length Mrs. Burne arrived, and put an end to

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her

her apprehensions; for she began to fear that a return of her Lady's disorder might have detained her. After a pleasant walk, they reached the place of meeting, which was such as would have suited two faithful lovers as well as friends; for it was situated in the most sequestered part of the park, upon the verge of a small, but clear and beautiful lake, whose banks rising on every side, and being clothed with the richest verdure, and crowned with weeping willows, hanging birch, mountain pine, and other picturesque trees, formed an enclosure of the most pleasing kind. Fronting the door of the bathing-house by which Juliana entered, was a large folding one, which being thrown open, afforded the most delightful view of the lake, its green enclosure, and a waterfall broken by rough stones, and several trees and bushes, which, in part, concealed it from the sight. The morning
6 being

being very hot, the sun shining with unclouded splendor, nothing could be more refreshing and agreeable than this cool retreat; our heroine was enchanted by its beauty; and when Lady Frances told her it was intirely planned by Sir Charles himself, she expressed her admiration of his taste in the warmest terms. He really has a great deal (said Lady Frances) and a great deal of understanding, knowledge, and goodness of heart; all he wants is a well-suited partner to possess that heart, and detach it from a few ill-grounded prejudices and consequent follies which at present prevent his becoming the perfect character nature designed him for.

But would not a lady run some hazard, who should undertake to remove them, (answered Juliana.) Men of Sir Charles's sense do not adopt an opinion, till they imagine they have well examined its validity: and I think I have

B 2

observed,

observed, that men are more tenaciously fond of a false principle, and exert far more ingenuity and force to maintain it, than ever they bestow upon the defence of poor unregarded truth. That is (replied Lady Frances) because falsehood requires all, and more than all, the ingenuity which the most sensible man possesses, to support her unstable cause; whereas truth, though naked and unprotected by wit or learning, can, by merely telling her own simple tale, silence the eloquent, and refute the wise. But Sir Charles's grand error, that upon which all the rest depend, is not one of those that favor inclination, and may rather be said to be chosen than received; it is a mistake which the general appearance of things is but too much calculated to lead a man of reflection into, though there cannot be one more dangerous to his interest, morals and peace. He believes, that
is,

is, he once did believe, that the present generation of young women are not such, in whose hands a man of sense could, without extreme rashness, trust his repose and honour. In short, that neither their educations, or general habits, fit them for wives. He admires female beauty; acknowledges that many women have wit and talents, and, had their minds been properly cultivated, might have been amiable; but the wrong bias of modern education is, he says, sufficient to spoil the best disposition: for what (have I often heard him say) are female accomplishments, the acquisition of which occupy so many of the most valuable years of life, and why are they studied? Is a young lady taught to be graceful and elegant, in order that she may endear herself to her friends, and do honour to her instructors? Is she persuaded to apply to any particular study, such as

B 3 music,

music, painting, &c. because her father is fond of it, and would be mortified if she does not excel? These are motives that would lead her mind insensibly to its proper duties, and the kind friend and attentive daughter, would probably become the obliging and faithful wife. But the very contrary of this is the present mode; a girl is told, that she must be content to confine herself to her father's house, her masters and governess, for a certain number of years, at the end of which she shall be introduced to the gay world, or, as it is called, brought out, with all possible *eclat*. And wherefore? That, too, is fully explained to the young lady, in order that she may captivate some man of rank and fortune, and marry to advantage. Here did it end, all would be tolerably well; but, contrary to the comedies we usually see performed in our theatres, where matrimony

mony concludes, in our dramas of modern life, it only begins the piece; for having run through the usual forms of husband-hunting, and at last, by means of family connections, or the interference of some assisting friend, caught the fool who is to afford her the grand privileges she has sought for long, the reign of levity commences, and he has no choice, but to close his eyes, and mix with the numerous herd who share his fortune; or, by opening them to the folly he has committed, live in a constant state of domestic discord.

Such (continued Lady Frances) has been my nephew's opinion of modern female manners; and though I doubt not but there are to be found very many amiable exceptions, yet I fear it is, in general, but too just. Wherein then is he blameable for entertaining it? (said Juliana.) He is blameable, for not rather endeavouring to discover one of

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the

the exceptions I just mentioned, (answered Lady Frances,) than suffering a prejudice against the married state to become one of the habits of his mind, and entering into such a plan of life as must, if long persevered in, render him unworthy the affection of a woman of principle and delicacy. Ah! (continued she,) what would I not give to see him the husband of my dear Miss Maitland! Pardon, my love, a wish which I assure you is but the effusion of the moment, and proceeds from the admiration I feel for your many and uncommon excellencies.

You cannot, my dearest madam, (replied Juliana,) pay me a higher compliment than is implied by wishing me the wife of a man who I know you consider and love as a son; but you do not know that I am destined never to change the name of Maitland. I have heard (replied her ladyship) that a part
of

of your fortune depends upon your preserving it ; but I did not know that you had quite resolved in favor of Sir George. I have several times seen him at Mr. Mordant's. May you be happy, my dear Juliana, whoever is so fortunate as to become the object of your choice.

I have by no means resolved in favor of Sir George, (answered our heroine,) but I am fully determined never to alter my name. If I do not marry a Maitland, I will die single. There is a younger brother, (said Lady Frances, smiling,) who Mrs. Mordant tells me is one of the finest young men in the kingdom. You blush, my dear ! your countenance was not intended to keep secrets. Let me again repeat, May my sweet Juliana be happy, let who will be the object of her choice ! though I must acknowledge, that, had that,

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choice

TO HENRY AND ISABELLA.

choice been left to me, Mr. Maitland would have been less fortunate.

Several hours had passed in the most agreeable manner, before either of the friends thought of returning to their different habitations. Lady Frances had prevailed upon Juliana to breakfast with her, which she the more readily consented to do, having the evening before mentioned to Mrs. Mordant the promise she had made of meeting her the next morning, which she knew would prevent the family's being alarmed by her unusually long absence, or their waiting breakfast for her, as they had once done. The pleasantness of the place she was in, and the company of one who, short as their intimacy had been, was become so dear to her, gave wings to the hours; and more might have fled unnoticed, had she not been reminded of their lapse. While they were busily engaged in conversation,
they

they were suddenly interrupted by a smart rap at the door, and upon its being opened, Albert made his appearance.

After begging pardon for intruding upon them, he turned to Juliana, and told her, he had been deputed by the whole family at Mordant-Place to petition for her return. You know (continued he) that scarce any of us can live without you; but there is one arrived, about two hours since, who is quite impatient for your presence. Had you seen how poor Lord Belford looked, when he was informed that you were absent, hard as your heart is, it would certainly have pitied his disappointment; but he no sooner heard that you were every moment expected home, being only gone to take a morning walk, than his anguish was suddenly converted into joy; and that again, from your delay, into impatience: such

are the tormenting vicissitudes which love, almighty love ! imposes upon his votaries. At last, out of mere compassion to the poor peer, and fearing lest the agitations of his mind should bring on another fit of the gout, I was requested to find you out, and intreat that you will return, and by appearing in all your charms,

At once, both justify and pay
The pains he feels from your delay.

Lord Belford (said Lady Frances) is Lord Belford in the country ? He is at present at Mordant-Place, (replied Albert,) but the family there, are not particularly obliged to him for his company, as his motive for honouring them with it, at this time, is rather too apparent : in short, to let your Ladyship into a secret, which will soon be promulgated, he is fallen so desperately into love with Miss Maitland,

Maitland, that he cannot exist out of her presence. If he is so much in love as you describe him to be, (answered Juliana, smiling,) his case is indeed desperate; for I fear it will never be my fortune to wear a coronet. Then it will be your fortune to reject one, (replied Albert,) for I am confident, had poor Lord Belford a dozen, he would lay them all at your feet. Where did you become acquainted with him? (said her Ladyship, addressing our heroine.) I never had the honour of seeing him till yesterday, (answered she,) when he dined at Marilly; and as your Ladyship knows how large a part of the day I passed in your apartment, you cannot but acknowledge that my charms are very striking, and that Lord Belford submitted as readily as the enemies of Cæsar: for, according to Mr. Albert Mordant's account, my conquest must have been achieved by a single

a single glance, and that the first too, or his Lordship's passion could never have made such a progress in so very short a time. Oh ! (answered Albert,) the strongest passion is always of the quickest growth ; that which requires time and care is ever weak and puny.

I wonder (said Lady Frances) that Sir Charles did not mention to me his being here yesterday. She then paused, and seemed wholly lost in thought for a moment ; when, suddenly recovering from her reverie, she asked Albert if Lord Belford intended to continue long at Mordant-Place. Only a fortnight, (answered Albert.) It was settled, before I came out this morning, that he should make one of our party to Stanton-races, and from thence he means to return to his seat in the west of England. But come, Miss Maitland, (continued he, assisting her to put on her calash,) consider, every moment we delay adds

to the pangs your love-sick peer is condemned to feel. If you resolve not to be kind, at least be not unnecessarily cruel. Juliana replied, that he was far more cruel, in tearing her from that sweet retreat; and still more, (continued she, approaching Lady Frances,) from the mistress of it. Her Ladyship said, she hoped Lord Belford's being at Mordant-Place would not prevent her having sometimes the pleasure of seeing her at the bathing-house; adding, that she should breakfast there every morning. Juliana perfectly understood the invitation, and replied, that it must be something more than want of inclination that should prevent her attendance upon her every fine morning; and after Albert had, in the name of his mother, expressed a hope of soon being favored with her company for a day, they took their leave.

On

On their return home, the subject of Lord Belford's passion was renewed; for it was difficult to force Albert out of his usual vein: and though our heroine strove to change the conversation, by introducing several topics of discourse which she thought sufficiently common and easy to be discussed, the moment she ceased to speak, he instantly recurred to those that best suited his disposition and habit of mind.

Upon their arrival at the house, they found the room where the family usually sat in a morning quite empty, the ladies being gone up to dress, and, as a servant informed Albert, my Lord and Mr. Mordant in the library. Upon looking at her watch, Juliana found it was full three o'clock; and dinner being always ready exactly at half an hour past four, she hastened to her apartment, in order to prepare herself for it.

She

She was not half dressed when somebody rapped gently at her door; which being opened by her maid, Lady Maitland entered. Surprised to see her ready before the moment of assembling in the dining parlour, she expressed her wonder at so unusual a phenomenon; to which Lady Maitland answered, that not having seen her all morning, she had a mind to indulge herself with half an hour of her dear child's company, before the rest of the family were ready to share it with her. You see, (said she,) I can exert myself when I have a motive sufficiently strong. She then proceeded to complain of the very little of her daughter's company she was suffered to enjoy; saying, she should certainly be jealous of Lady Frances Seward, if she monopolized so much of her time. To all this apparent fondness, Juliana returned obliging and respectful answers; but there was something

thing in Lady Maitland's manner which prevented its having any effect upon her heart, something that proved it did not flow from her own.

She then proceeded to tell our heroine, that she had written to town for her new dress, and to describe in what respects she intended it should be different from hers, and wherein they should be the same; adding, that as it was to be a full dress, it was necessary to make considerable alterations both in the form and trimming; in the latter of which she feared her dear girl would think she had been a little extravagant.

Juliana replied, that she wished her to order whatever she liked best, provided the expence was not greater than her purse would admit of. You know (continued she) my income is not at present very large, and running in debt, while I am under age, and cannot insure payment to those who are willing to

to trust me, is what I cannot endure to think of. Not insure the payment of a debt ! (exclaimed Lady Maitland,) what hinders your paying any you may now contract, when you come of age ? I may not live till I am of age, (answered Juliana,) and am therefore resolved to spend no more than is certainly my own : but (continued she, smiling,) I am at present pretty rich, having received a quarter's allowance just before I left Furze-Hill. I'm extremely glad to hear that, (replied Lady Maitland,) for, notwithstanding the elegant present you have made me, unless you can be good enough to afford me a little more assistance, it will not be in my power to go to Stanton races, which, as Mr. Mordant is one of the stewards, would be thought a great sight. Travelling, especially upon the continent, is so very expensive ; and though Mr. Mordant is an exceedingly good

good kind of man, he is one of those who knows how to make every one pay their proper share.

Juliana now clearly comprehended the motive which had been strong enough to induce her Ladyship to hurry over the important task of dressing, and actually appear equipped for the day, a full hour before the time of dinner. She replied, gravely, that it was a pity she could not, for the sake of her own peace and comfort, contrive to be more independent upon so considerable an income as she possessed. That any assistance in her power to afford, she could not refuse to a mother, but at present she had several demands unanswered. She had two or three pensioners, whose salaries were nearly due; and, being their only dependence, they must not be disappointed: that the rent of her school-house, and the teachers stipends must likewise be paid this quarter;

quarter ; so that she feared it would not be possible for her to spare much, but if fifty guineas would supply her present wants, it was at her service.

It is no wonder that you are not rich, while you burden yourself with such unnecessary expences, (answered Lady Maitland.) Perhaps (replied Juliana) we differ a little in our opinions of what is unnecessary. I am sorry that I cannot with any tolerable degree of convenience to myself, or justice to others, supply you with a larger sum. If that will be of use to you, I will fetch it immediately.

Lady Maitland was not one of those who are above accepting small advantages, when they cannot procure great ones. She answered, that though fifty pounds would not enable her to appear in the manner she ought to do, it was better than nothing ; upon which our heroine opened the drawer of a small
writing

writing desk, which she usually carried about with her, and took out a fifty pound bank note, which she presented to her Ladyship, who received it with a discontented look, saying, My Juliana was not used to be worse than her word, and she promised me fifty guineas. Juliana blushed for her mother's unfeeling meanness, and again opening the same drawer, took out a note for ten pounds, and folding it in the other which she had in a half peevish manner thrown upon the table, gave them both to her, not without an air a little expressive of disdain.

Her Ladyship having obtained the purpose for which her visit was made, though not quite in so full a manner as she had expected, did not stay long for the sake of enjoying her dear child's conversation; but pretending to want something which she had left in her dressing room, quitted the apartment, leaving

leaving her to finish the business of the toilet at leisure. This business, though never neglected, did not employ so many of Juliana's hours as it did of her mothers; indeed, very few who dressed with so much elegance, were so short a time about it, so that notwithstanding the interruption she had received, she was ready a quarter of an hour before the time of dining. But these odd quarter and half hours, which in general hang so heavy, she never suffered to be unemployed: the present was filled up with giving her cousin Mary an account of the manner in which she had spent the former part of that morning, as well as the preceding day; for she constantly made her and Mrs. Maitland partakers of every circumstance that befel her, especially those that afforded her pleasure. She had before, in the fullest manner, described the person and character of Lady Frances, and the
present

present sheet was half filled with her praises. It was one of her first and strongest wishes to bring her new friend personally acquainted with those she had so long loved and esteemed; as a preparation for which she had already repeatedly delineated them in such expressions of warm love, gratitude, and respect, that Lady Frances had more than once declared it would give her pleasure to be known to persons so worthy and amiable. Nor was she without hopes of persuading her to favor Mrs. Maitland with a visit, at the time she returned to Furze-Hill. Juliana's mind was much above that mean jealousy, which narrow ones so often feel from a consciousness that they merit little, and may therefore easily be rivalled in their friendships, or rather in their intimacies; for narrow minds are incapable of friendship. She wished to communicate every possible pleasure to those

those she esteemed, and particularly desired, that all those whom she loved should love one another.

From the pleasing employment of conversing (for so she considered this confidential correspondence) with those she so much regarded, our heroine was called by a summons to dinner. Upon entering the dining parlour, where the whole family, together with their noble guest, and several of the neighbouring ladies and gentlemen were assembled, the first who approached her was Sir Charles Hastings, who respectfully took her hand to lead her to the table, where having placed her, he seated himself by her side. Having returned the how-do-ye-do's of the company, her attention was engaged by Lord Belford, who having taken his place exactly opposite to her, addressed her with a voice of much softness, asking, if a poor invalid might hope at last to ob-

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tain a moment of her notice? She politely begged his pardon for not having observed him sooner; inquired after his health, and expressed much satisfaction, on hearing that he felt himself recovering, and growing stronger every hour. This satisfaction she really did feel; for she was much pleased with the lively conversation of Lord Belford, was a stranger to any part of his character, except his reputation for generosity and good nature, (qualities of which she was a great admirer,) and believed that his age and infirmities set his forming the slightest pretensions to a young woman of her great expectations almost out of the list of possibilities. On all these accounts, she listened to him with more than ordinary pleasure, and replied to every thing he said to her with particular complacency. If Sir Charles happened to speak to her at the same time with his Lordship, which was
more

more than once the case, she never failed to answer the peer first, and upon all occasions gave him a kind of preference, which the poor Baronet would have given worlds to obtain.

In the afternoon, as Lord Belford could not walk, a party at whist was proposed. Lady Maitland, Mrs. Mor-dant, Sir Harry Windsor, and another lady and gentleman, offered themselves to make up the table, and were just about to draw for places and partners, when the Peer turning to Juliana, by whom he had seated himself in the drawing room, asked her, if she would not favor him so far as to make one of their number. Juliana, who was at no time fond of cards, but least during the summer, when nature presents every intelligent creature with so many sources of amusement, greatly preferable to one which nothing but the long absence of others can excuse a sensible

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mind

mind for partaking of, hesitated a moment, and then said, if they wanted her, she was at their service. To which his Lordship answered, then we certainly want you ; and as it is always a custom to indulge children when they are not well, and I readily acknowledge myself a mere grown baby, I shall be quite disappointed, if not out of humour, unless you are assigned me for a partner. Mrs. Mordant said, with a smile, that, as his Lordship had condescended to plead childhood, it was but reasonable the privileges of that state, to which so many have a right, though few thought proper to claim them, should be allowed him : and none of the company objecting, Juliana, not without a little inward reluctance, sat down as Lord Belford's partner for the rubber.

Though our heroine had not at all studied the rules of whist, and practised them

them very little, her good sense and quickness of apprehension enabled her to play the game well, and his Lordship appeared highly satisfied with his partner during the two first rubbers; when she requesting to be excused for the remainder of the afternoon, he was obliged to cut in again with Lady Maitland.

Juliana had watched Lord Belford and her mother, both at Marly, and this day, in hope of observing in the former, some of that admiration, with the supposition of which Albert, and even Miss Mordant, had so often complimented the latter. I say, in hope; for she could not help secretly wishing, that she might have an advantageous opportunity of changing her name. She thought the title of countess would a little shade her follies; at least, she felt that she would be less to her, and she should blush less for Lady Belford

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than.

than for Lady Maitland. But she could not perceive that more than very common-place gallantries gave rise to a kind of expectation which she plainly saw her mother entertained, and which she concluded, was the only cause of her young relations flattering her with the belief that they had marked a more than ordinary regard in his Lordship's behaviour to her, except an inclination to divert themselves a little at her expence, of which she had more than once suspected Albert, notwithstanding his apparent good nature; and of which she knew Miss Mordant to be as capable as an envious disposition without talents could admit.

A few days, however, fully convinced her, that, however Lady Maitland might flatter herself with gay hopes, nothing could be further from the intentions of Lord Belford than a marriage with her, and that his views were

were fixed in a quarter which must for ever preclude such an expectation.

The following morning, induced both by the fineness of the weather, and the inclination she always felt to converse with Lady Frances, Juliana breakfasted at the bathing-house; with this pleasure she indulged herself almost every day, and every day returned more delighted with the understanding, manners and disposition of her friend. The first morning of her absence, Lord Belford complained much of the loss they sustained by it; the loss of what, he said, was in his estimation the most valuable thing upon earth, pleasure; and added, with a tone of affected half anger, who is this aunt of Sir Charles's, by whom we are to be deprived of what is so irrecoverable? Don't be quite so sure (cried Albert) that it is all for the aunt's sake; suppose Sir Charles himself should have been of the party? It

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is true, I did not actually see him yesterday, but methought I could trace his footsteps on the grass. Nobody, who is acquainted with Lady Frances, (replied Juliana,) will think I can want any inducement to visit her, except the pleasure of her conversation. What Lady Frances, (exclaimed the Peer.) Lady Frances Seward, (answered Mrs. Mordant,) one of the daughters of the late Earl of Clareville. Her sister was mother to Sir Charles Hastings. I once knew her, (said his Lordship, with some hesitation ;) she was then reckoned handsome and accomplished. She is still both, (said Juliana,) and one of the most pleasing women I ever knew. Well, I don't think so, (cried Lady Maitland ;) in my opinion she is too tall, and her eyes are too large ; then she is so pale, it is quite frightful ; one would think she had not an hour to live. I hope, (replied our heroine,) that

that paleness is no certain proof of illness,—any more than freshness is of youth or health, she was about to have said; but her good-nature suppressed her wit, as indeed it always did, when the one could not display itself but at expence of the other.

She has a very large fortune—has she not? (said Lord Belford.) She might have had one of the largest in the kingdom, (replied Mrs. Mordant,) for her father was so much offended by Lady Harriot's marriage with the late Sir Philip Hastings, that he left all his fortune, except one estate, which he annexed to the title, to his youngest daughter; but the moment it came into her possession, she generously divided every shilling with her sister: notwithstanding which, and several other very liberal actions she has performed, she is still one of the best female fortunes we have, except that

Lady, (continued she, waving her hand towards Juliana,) and a few more, we have none so large. She makes an odd kind of use of it, (said Lady Maitland, not appearing to have heard what Mrs. Mordant said of her generosity,) and leads a strange kind of moping life. Then she is so particular in her ways of thinking, and so fond of displaying her learning, (cried Miss Mordant;) I do not wonder she never married, (rejoined her Ladyship.)

Our heroine was about to have answered these accusations, so unmercifully and unjustly brought against her friend, when the entrance of Sir Charles Hastings, who seldom suffered a day to pass without visiting Mordant-Place, put an end to the conversation.

The subject of Stanton races was then brought forward, and Lady Maitland asked Sir Charles, if he intended to be there; to which he answered, that he
fully

fully meant to do himself that honour. Lord Belford said, he found himself so much stronger within the last three days, that he hoped to be a principal performer at the balls; to which Lady Maitland answered, that whoever had the honour of being his partner, would have cause to rejoice, for she thought his Lordship danced better than any man she ever knew. Lord Belford only bowed in return for this compliment. Perhaps a bow was not all that her Ladyship expected; but with that she was forced to be content. The Peer then asked Sir Charles, if Lady Frances intended to honour the races with her presence. My aunt (answered he) would be happy to show any proof of respect to Mr. and Mrs. Mordant, but she has so long disused herself from public places of every kind, that it would be quite disagreeable to her; and I am sure they are too good to wish her to do what

C 6 would

would so much distress her. To this Mrs. Mordant returned an obliging answer, and, after a good deal more chat upon the subject, invited the Baronet to make one in their party; saying, Lord Belford had proposed their setting out two or three days before the races began, and making a pleasant little tour in their way thither, and another on their return: to which Sir Charles readily consented, expressing a deep sense of the obligation Mrs. Mordant conferred upon him, in suffering him to become one of their attendants.

C H A P.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE FIRST LOVER.

IN the course of a few days, Lord Belford was so much recovered from his late illness, that he could walk about the room without any assistance, and in less than a week had regained as great a degree of activity as men of fifty usually possess. In proportion as he recovered his health and strength, his assiduity and attentions to our heroine increased, and became at length so pointed, as to escape the notice of none but herself. Partly blinded by the want of that quick-sighted vanity which represents every flatterer as a lover, and partly by the improbability there was that a man of Lord Belford's age, who did not want understanding, or knowledge of the world, should either hope
or

or wish to marry a woman of her youth and fortune, she did not in the smallest degree suspect his intentions, till an actual declaration from his Lordship, with the offer of a vast settlement, the full command of her own fortune, and every circumstance of pomp and splendor that could dazzle vanity, or bribe ambition, left her no longer the possibility of doubting.

The moment that surprize would permit her to speak, she in the fullest and most explicit manner declined, what she termed, the honour he offered her, softening her refusal with every expression of respect which politeness could demand, or good-nature dictate. She was far from fearing that he would condescend a second time to make her such proposals, much less tease her with complaints and repetitions of them; she was therefore greatly surprized, when, instead of immediately withdrawing

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ing his pretensions, he declared, that the happiness of his life depended upon the success of his present hopes, and that he would never forego them till she was the wife of another.

Fearing that he might interest her mother in his cause, who she knew considered rank and fortune as the only things necessary in marriage, and by that means subject her to more of what her Ladyship might call maternal advice, than would be agreeable to her, she went immediately to her dressing-room, where the greatest part of her morning was usually spent, and in few words informed her of what had passed between his Lordship and herself, begging that, if any application should be made to her, she would entirely discourage his further pursuit, since she was fixed in her resolution of never suffering it to become successful.

Lady

Lady Maitland appeared excessively hurt and amazed by the information. She said, it was one of the last things she should have expected; that Lord Belford must certainly be out of his senses, to think of marrying a girl of Juliana's age and fortune; and entirely agreed with her, that nothing could be more absurd than such an intention. Had he fixed upon a fine woman of forty, (said she,) there would have been some reason in it; but a girl, a mere child! nothing could be more ridiculous. She assured her daughter, that, if he spoke to her upon the subject, she should tell him her sentiments in the fullest manner; and advised her, the next time he renewed his addresses, to recommend a more suitable and rational choice to him: adding, no woman of forty, in the kingdom, would refuse him.

Juliana

Juliana having thus, as she believed, secured herself from being teased by more than one, had little doubt, by a second steady refusal, of putting an end to his Lordship's pretensions; and determined if, on the contrary, he was mean enough to persecute her, in such a manner as should render her stay at Mordant-Place disagreeable, (for she found it was now his intention to return there, after the races were over,) to shorten her visit, and, little as she wished to do so during Sir George Maitland's stay there, return to Furze-Hill.

A whole day passed after she had made this resolution, without Lord Belford's appearing to seek any occasion of speaking to her; but his behaviour was too particular to give her any hopes of his having relinquished the character of a lover. In the evening, however, she was convinced that he had not suffered the day to pass unemployed, in what he supposed

supposed the advancement of his wishes; for scarce was she retired to her apartment at night, when Lady Maitland entered, and, after several of her usual tender speeches, by way of prelude, told her, that she had been revolving Lord Belford's proposals in her mind, and, as the welfare of her dear child was the thing nearest to her heart, viewing them in all possible lights, and upon weighing the advantages which must arise to her from accepting them, in opposition to the objections that might be made to them, she found the latter light and trifling, in comparison of the former; and that, after the most mature consideration, she would by all means advise her to accept the honour he intended her; which, she said, was as great as any young woman, be her accomplishments and fortune what they would, could reasonably aspire to, and what many a lady of the very first quality would

would think herself happy in obtaining.

Juliana heard all she had to say with patience and respect, but when she had done speaking, begged, in the most serious manner, that she would not any more give her the pain of rejecting the advice she thought proper to offer her, Were I (said she) poor and dependent, I would not relieve myself out of circumstances so unpleasant by a mercenary marriage; much less will I be guilty of such an unjustifiable piece of folly, now that I am opulent, and accountable for my actions——Do not be too secure! (interrupted Lady Maitland.) Every condition is liable to change. I advise you, as a real friend, to accept Lord Belford's offers, and secure to yourself the immense advantages they will afford you. When you are his wife, and not before, you may with certainty

certainly talk of opulence and independence!

If I may not call myself rich and independent, (answered our heroine,) who shall pretend to be so? Then you intend to marry Sir George Maitland? (said her Ladyship.) I am by no means resolved to marry any body, (replied Juliana,) but of the two, I would rather give my hand to Lord Belford than Sir George. There! then you lose half your boasted fortune at once! (cried Lady Maitland.) However, I am glad you have no particular attachment to him, because I know he has none for you, his affections having long been fixed upon Miss Mordant. Upon Miss Mordant! (exclaimed Juliana.) Yes, (answered her Ladyship,) upon Miss Mordant! Had his fortune been large enough to have obtained her father's consent, it would have been a match long since: but I know it has been
agreed

agreed upon between the lovers, that he should treat you with all possible neglect, in order to force you to refuse him; the moment you have done which, the half of your fortune becoming his, it will be a match immediately.

I wonder, (said Juliana, after a moment's pause) that, engaged as you say the affections of Miss Mordant are to Sir George Maitland, she should still be so very fond of admiration. Not at all, (answered Lady Maitland;) nothing can be more uncertain than her marriage with Sir George, for, should you resolve not to refuse him, he must become your husband; or forfeit all interest in your fortune, either of which would equally destroy her hope; it would therefore be very wrong in her to lose any other chance for settling to advantage. Juliana smiled, and said, she congratulated her upon possessing such very complying affec-
 5 tions.

tions. They are such affections as every young woman of fashion should possess, (answered her Ladyship;) love, and such kind of romantic stuff, is only fit for untaught country girls. Then, as I am quite a country girl, (answered our heroine,) and untaught in such kind of doctrine, I must here declare, that I will never bestow my hand upon any man, till I can give my whole heart with it; and till I meet with one, who, according to my notions of worthiness, deserves both, I will live single. Sir George Maitland is by no means that man; and I shall be obliged to your Ladyship if you will inform Miss Mordant, that, so far as her future fortune depends upon me, it is perfectly secure, and that the moment I come of age, I shall be ready to give her lover his refusal, whenever it is agreeable to him to ask it. As for Lord Belford, give me leave to say, once for all, that,

were

were he a prince, and ready to settle whole provinces upon me, I would refuse him, as I do now.

A degree of anger and ill-temper, which Juliana had never before observed, sparkled in the eyes of Lady Maitland. She rose, and, with a voice full of resentment, told our heroine, that she might one day repent her folly. When that day arrives, (continued she, with a look of malicious triumph,) remember that I warned you of it; and I once more repeat my advice, if you are wise, and consult your own advantage, marry Lord Belford. Saying which words, she quitted the room with an air very different to that which Juliana had been accustomed to from her.

For some moments our heroine stood in silent amazement, unable to account for so unexpected a change; till recollecting the meanness of her mother's

disposition, and the necessitous state to which her extravagance reduced her, she made no doubt, but that Lord Belford had offered some considerable present, in case she could influence her in his favor. Satisfied with this probable solution of her Ladyship's strange conduct, she retired to rest; but some hours were spent in reflections, partly pleasing, and partly painful, before sleep visited her pillow. In both of these, Henry Maitland had a share. Sometimes she wished his return, sometimes feared it; sometimes her imagination was brightened with every circumstance of happiness, sometimes gloomed by apprehended disappointment, and her heart almost sunk in dejection. At length, nature's soft restorer, balmy sleep, deigned to weigh her eye-lids down, and steep her senses in forgetfulness.

Early

Early the following morning, our heroine arose, and repaired to her favorite place of rendezvous, the bathing-house. She found Lady Frances already there, who kissing her cheek with maternal tenderness, told her she had been thinking of her almost the whole last night. Juliana asked, upon what account she had been happy enough to occupy so much of her thought? My dearest young friend, (answered Lady Frances,) your excellencies render you extremely dear to me; but there is another who is, I fear, too sensible of those excellencies, for whose sake, if I cannot influence your affections a little in his favor, I could almost wish you less perfect. I need not tell you, that the person I mean is Sir Charles Hastings. You cannot be a stranger to the love he bears you. You are the only woman who could ever fix his

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serious

serious affections. Cannot you afford us some little hope?

Ah! my dearest madam, (cried Juliana,) why will you ask what I have not the power to grant? To be your relation, to be considered by you as a daughter, would indeed be happiness, could I give up—could I divest my heart—What shall I say, my dear Lady Frances?—You perfectly understand me. Have you not said, my countenance was not designed to keep secrets? I do understand you, my lovely girl, (answered Lady Frances,) nor from this hour will I ever importune you upon a subject which I see distresses you. Sir Charles must endeavour to conquer a hopeless passion, which can only be indulged at the expence of his future peace. Oh, that it could have been successful! How happy, how respectable, how worthy, would the remainder of his life have been! But all hope
of

of that is now over ; he will never meet a second Juliana Maitland ! She spoke these words with great emotion, and scarce had pronounced them, when an inner door opened, and, with a look of extreme dejection, the Baronet appeared.

Juliana instinctively arose as Sir Charles entered ; the blood crimsoned her cheek, and she sincerely wished herself at a distance from the spot upon which she then stood. He approached her with a tender melancholy respect, and gently taking one of her hands,—can Miss Maitland (said he) forgive the presumption I have been guilty of ? I could not behold happiness in view, and not strive to attain it. In many women I have remarked several perfections, but never, till I beheld you, did I find them united in one. Unworthy as I am of such a treasure, it cannot be thought strange that I should wish to

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make

make it my own. But you are too good to add your anger to my disappointment; and though the happiness of your love is reserved for another, may I not aspire to some degree of your friendship? For Lady Frances's sake, for—Your own sake, (interrupted our heroine, recovered from her confusion,) I shall gladly grant to your merits that esteem they so justly demand. More than friendship is not in my power to give; but of that, if worthy his acceptance, Sir Charles Hastings may always be assured.—Ah! loveliest of women, (exclaimed the Baronet, pressing her hand to his lips in a rapture rather warmer than modern friendship would authorize,) do not increase my regrets by your condescending kindness! Happy! happy Maitland!

When I promised you my friendship, (said Juliana, gravely,) I meant it should be upon condition that you solicit no more.

more. I will solicit no more, (answered the Baronet, in much agitation,) I will not disturb your happiness by my complaints. From this moment do I cease to hope; and perhaps, in time, my wishes may be governed by reason, and become obedient to your's. In the mean time, and to the end of my life, the sweet friendship you offer me shall be my solace and consolation. I receive it, charming Miss Maitland, as a rich gift; nor will I forfeit a possession so valuable, by vainly striving to gain what is unattainable.

You now speak and act like yourself, (said Lady Frances, addressing her nephew.) In the weak transports of last night, I had almost lost you; but you are now again master of that reason which was bestowed upon us for the regulation of our passions, and in the perversion or loss of which man is the most

D 3 worthless,

worthless, inconsistent, and miserable of beings.

I trust, my dear madam, (answered Sir Charles,) that I shall in time be able to subscribe to this rational creed. At present, though somewhat cooler than last night, I am scarce equal to the task. The code of wisdom is easily learnt, but its laws are practised with pain and difficulty. That practice shall however be my study; and though I may never be a happy, I may at least become a patient man. So saying, he quitted the room, with a look too disordered to afford him any present pretensions to the epithet he professed to desire.

The tears which fell from the eyes of Lady Frances, strongly affected our heroine. She was silent for a moment; then rising, and approaching her with a kind of fearful tenderness, You will love me no longer! (said she.) You will rather regard me as the cause of uneasiness.

ness to one so dear to you. No, my beloved Juliana, (replied her Ladyship,) if I did not sincerely love you—if I did not think you the most amiable and deserving of women, I should be less grieved and disappointed. The very first time I had the pleasure of being in your company, I formed a wish, which has grown more and more strong as my knowledge of your merits increased. My partiality to my nephew induced me to hope, that he might appear to you as agreeable as, I soon found, you were to him; and, notwithstanding the intimation you gave me of a pre-engagement of affections, I still flattered myself that it might be possible. It is the relinquishment of these ill-founded pleasing hopes which has forced from me those external appearances of concern by which your good-nature is affected. I beg your pardon, my love, for showing such an earnest desire for what is so re-

pugnant to your wishes ! Believe me, I would not insure the happiness of Sir Charles Hastings at the expence of your peace ; and that, short as hath been our knowledge of each other, I do not love him more than you.

The conversation was of too interesting a nature to suffer breakfast to be much attended to : it was removed almost untasted ; and, after a promise of visiting Lady Frances at the same place again the next morning, our heroine took her leave, and returned, attended by one of her footmen, who always waited upon her home, her Ladyship not thinking it safe for her to walk through the park alone. Her reflexions, as she passed along, were more uneasy and dissatisfactory than she usually experienced. So far was she from triumphing in the effect of her charms, that nothing could be more mortifying to her sensibility, than the thought of disturbing

disturbing the peace of those whom she so much esteemed. She was incapable of giving pain to any human creature, without partaking it with them; but, to distress those whose merit and kindness demanded her esteem and gratitude, —to force tears from the eyes of Lady Frances Seward, was not to be thought upon without a pang of regret, more interesting and afflictive to her heart than ordinary occasions could excite.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE ECCLAIRCISSEMENT.

OUR heroine parted from Lady Frances so much sooner than usual, that, upon her return to Mordant-Place, she found the family still seated round the breakfast-table. Small as the company was, they were broken into several divisions. Mrs. Mordant and Lord Belford were chatting in a general disengaged manner. Lady Maitland and Miss Mordant were in close confabulation, speaking with low voices, and turning their faces towards each other, so as to exclude the rest of the company from partaking of their conversation. Albert was carelessly looking over a Critical Review; and
Mr.

Mr. Mordant studying a political pamphlet.

No sooner was Juliana seated, than Lady Maitland turning towards her, said, with much ill-humour in her countenance, I can't imagine, my dear, how you can think of going out every morning! Surely you know very little of good-breeding, or believe us extremely ignorant! I thought you came here to visit Mrs. Mordant and me, not to spend half your time with Lady Frances Seward! I did not apprehend (replied Juliana) that good-breeding consisted in useless restraints, or that either Mrs. Mordant or your Ladyship would make any objection to my passing a few hours every day with a person so amiable and worthy as Lady Frances Seward. I hope (answered Mrs. Mordant) that Miss Maitland will, in every respect, consider herself as at home, during her stay here. You cannot wonder

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der (continued she, addressing Juliana) that your mother should wish for as much as possible of your company; but I am sure she is far from wishing to lay disagreeable restraints upon you, or prevent the cultivation of an intimacy so pleasant and unexceptionable. I would wish her to act right, and like a reasonable creature, (answered Lady Maitland.) I hate romance. Then (replied Lord Belford) your Ladyship and I differ entirely in our sentiments: a little romance is quite necessary to the perfection of the female character; there is no dignity, no superior excellence without it. It is the extinction of it in you, that has introduced the modern cold insensibility among us. When the women ceased to be romantic, the men forgot to love. Oh! (cried Lady Maitland) this is a doctrine that will exactly suit Juliana. But Lord Belford is the last from whom

whom I should have expected to hear it (said Mrs. Mordant.) Why so, my dear madam? (answered he.) Men oftener admire what they do not, than what they do practise.

He had scarce spoken these words, when a post-chaise drove up to the door; and while the company were conjecturing who it should contain, our heroine slipped away to her dressing-room, where she amused herself with writing to her beloved friends at Furze-Hill, till she was interrupted by her maid, who reminded her, that it was time to dress; which task being performed, she recollected that as Lady Maitland, though merely out of ill-temper, had complained of her frequent and long absences, it would appear like an entire disregard of her, if she passed the whole morning alone. At first she thought of going to her apartment, and sitting with her while she dressed; but
fearing

so be again teased about Lord Belford, she resolved to go into the little drawing-room, where the family usually assembled before dinner, and wait till some of them came down.

Upon opening the door, she saw a gentleman standing at one of the windows, in a half-reclining attitude, with a book in his hand. Seeing that he did not observe her, she was about to have closed the door, and return; but just as she was stepping back, he turned towards her, and, to her extreme surprise, presented the countenance of Henry Maitland. Juliana started, the blood rushed into her face, and she was unable to advance or retreat. Nor was his cheek less crimsoned; though it was easy to perceive that he had been prepared for the sight of her, by having been informed that she was in the house.

Reco-

Recovering from the confusion, which the moment before he appeared to have been in, he approached our heroine with a smile of gaiety, and taking her hand, How happy I am (said he) in the pleasure of seeing my dear cousin, so many days before I expected it! How long have you been at Mordant-Place? and when did you hear from our friends at Furze-Hill? I had yesterday the pleasure (said Juliana) of hearing, that Mrs. Maitland and Mary were well. And Sir George, (returned Henry,) was not he included in the list of health? I did not hear that he was sick, (answered Juliana, colouring from a consciousness of Henry's belief, that an engagement of interests, if not of affections, subsisted between herself and his brother;) but I suppose you will soon certify yourself of all these particulars. I shall probably be at home in three days, (answered Henry.)

Henry.) It has been a constant custom with me to spend a couple of days at Mordant-Place, both in my going and returning to and from Oxford. I shall not now exceed that number; but Mrs. Mordant tells me you mean to continue here during the greatest part of the summer. Probably I shall, (answered Juliana, a deeper crimson glowing upon her cheek.) I find you are going to the races, (continued he) and that Lord Belford and Sir Charles Hastings are to be your escort. I believe it is so intended, (answered she, coldly.) If the weather continues to be so fine as it has been for some time past, (proceeded he,) your little jaunt will be extremely delightful. I think it is admirably well planned, and, in so agreeable a party, cannot fail to afford you great pleasure.

Upon my word, (replied Juliana, a little disdainfully,) you have gained a
great

great deal of information since your arrival! Considering the shortness of the time, you have picked up a number of very interesting particulars. Henry was about to reply, when the door opening, Miss Mordant entered, together with Sir Harry Windsor and his sister, a fine showy woman of about eight and twenty, who had enjoyed the benefit of a town education, and acquired all those accomplishments which are expected from it. These, however, she had nearly forgotten, or laid aside. Her harpsichord she never touched; she had refused herself from drawing; was too idle to dance, and had entirely lost her Italian; a tolerable knowledge of the French language, which she had every day occasion to practise, was all she retained; but she was, what is styled, very much the woman of fashion; had seen a great deal of the world, that is, had for the last ten years frequented
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all the publick places both of London and Paris, dressed in the court style, was acquainted with the newest topics of conversation, a great deal of polite private history, and the particulars of all that passed in the world of gallantry and intrigue. She had long been, what Sir Charles Hastings styled, a husband-hunter; but, though the chase had been followed with considerable ardor and perseverance, no deer, far enough for her purpose, had yet fallen a prey to her machinations and activity; or, to speak without a figure, she had never been lucky enough to meet with an opportunity of marrying in such a manner as would enable her to live in a certain style, among a certain class. She had not, however, given up the hope, or pursuit; every man of fortune and fashion was a mark at which she aimed the arrows with which Cupid had armed her eyes: but her design

was

was too openly displayed, nor did she take pains enough to conceal her sentiments, with regard to what she esteemed the proper inducements to matrimony; so that they, who at first sight were pleased with her person, had warning, from her undisguised levity, to place the shield of prudence before their hearts, ere she had compleated her conquest. Her general place of residence was with her mother at Bath, where she was admitted unto the first parties, and where her face was as well known as that of the Master of the Ceremonies; but she often visited her brother in the country, and spent a part of every winter at his house in town. Sir Harry, who was a weak well-meaning man, was extremely fond of, and entirely governed by her, she having just the degree of understanding and manners which are best calculated to manage a fool.

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The entrance of this little party relieved Juliana from the disagreeable necessity of keeping up a common-place conversation with a person who was not indifferent to her, and whose understanding was, she knew, too good to be really interested about such trifles. Miss Windfor, having seen her once or twice at Mr. Mordant's house in town, slightly acknowledged a remembrance of our heroine, by a distant courtesy, and a half-pronounced "I hope you are well, ma'am!" for she was no very warm admirer of the young and beautiful of her own sex; indeed, one of her greatest pleasures was to insult and mortify them, as often as it lay in her power, and Juliana's large fortune, added to the above-named objectionable qualities, rendered her an object of peculiar envy and aversion. She then turned to Henry, and, with the most gracious smile, declared her pleasure

ture in seeing him so unexpectedly, congratulated him upon his manumission from the restraints of a college, and added, "I hope you will now become what nature designed you for, one of us." A very lively conversation then took place between them, upon the subject of his becoming her pupil, during which Miss Mordant whispered Juliana, that it was strongly suspected that Miss Windsor was, in her heart, very partial to Mr. Maitland; and it was thought, would have no objection to giving up the world, of which she had long been so fond, and becoming a country parson's wife.

It was not till now, that Juliana observed Henry's change of dress, and from it, perceived that he had taken orders. Such a proof of his having entirely given up, if, indeed, he ever had entertained any serious thoughts of her, sensibly affected her; and more sensibly,

sensibly, as she felt that the task of disengaging her affections, the object of them continuing so amiable and pleasing, would be no easy one. With a half hesitation, she asked Miss Mordant, whether it was believed that Mr. Maitland returned the Lady's regard? Oh! certainly, (replied Miss Mordant,) there can be little doubt of that. Do you consider what an amazing advantage it will be to him? Every body thinks, that Sir Harry will never marry, so that at his death, all his fortune will be her's. Besides she has ten thousand pounds at her own disposal, has great expectations from her mother, and there is no doubt but her brother will at present do something very handsome for her. I should not wonder if he was at least to double her present income; for he is extremely fond of her, and has no near relations.

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While

While she was speaking, Lady Maitland, Mrs. Mordant, Lord Belford and Albert entered. Mutual compliments being exchanged, Lord Belford approached our heroine, and began a conversation upon indifferent subjects, which she was glad to enter into, as a relief to her spirits, and a means of diverting her attention from mortifying and painful ideas; but she was unable to disengage her thoughts, or answer him with her usual ease and good sense. Her words were confused, and though her eyes were absolutely forbidden to wander towards a quarter of the room where Miss Windsor sat talking with great earnestness to Mr. Maitland, and playing off a thousand affected coquetish airs, yet could she not help listening to what passed there, though, as the lady chose, sometimes to speak so low as not to be heard with any distinctness, she could but ill gratify her desire of knowing

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ing the subject of their conversation. It was at length interrupted by the announcement of dinner, during which nothing passed but that kind of chat which is usually heard upon such occasions.

When the company were removed into the drawing-room, Miss Windsor, who had been informed by Miss Mor-dant that Lord Belford paid his addresses to Juliana, took particular pains to engage him in conversation. She talked about Bath, London, Paris, the Abbey, the Opera-house; gave her opinion of the best dancers; preferred Rubinelle to Mara; and ran through the whole list of polite public amusement. Then sliding into private histories of ——— and Lady ———, and Colonel C—— and Mrs. D——, one anecdote followed another in such quick succession, that the poor Peer, whose politeness would not suffer him to quit her in the middle
of

of one of these voluble details, was obliged to submit to the penance of hearing with patience, and the lady had the extreme pleasure of believing that she tormented Juliana, by detaching from her an admirer of so much consequence ; for she had no conception that it was possible for a mere private gentlewoman to reject the dignity of a Countess, especially when such a vast fortune as Lord Belford possessed was annexed to it. She was at length interrupted by Lady Maitland, who told her she had a design upon her and her brother, and then related the plan that had been laid down for a three days tour, previous to their going to Stanton, and concluded with saying, she was sure the whole party would rejoice, if she and Sir Harry would join them. She had no sooner done speaking, than Miss Windfor, who had wished for some excuse to get her brother from Juliana, to

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whom

whom he was talking, called out, Harry, come here! I want ye. The Baronet, who never refused any request of her's, immediately arose, and walking across the room, asked what she wanted. Sit down here, said she, pointing to a chair that was placed near, and just now I'll tell you what you must do. She then repeated what Lady Maitland had told her, adding, I think, Harry, I should like to go. With all my heart, (replied her brother,) I have not the least objection. Lay down your own plan, and it shall be my business to assist in the execution. There's a complaisant brother! (cried Lady Maitland.) What an excellent husband would you make, Sir Harry! It is really a thousand pities that you should remain a bachelor. The Baronet bowed. Poor Lady Maitland was unlucky in her compliments: she seldom got more than a bow in return for them.

In

In the mean time, Albert, seeing Sir Harry Windsor leave Juliana, took his seat, and shrugging up his shoulders, exclaimed in a low voice, I wonder any woman alive should ever rear a daughter ! Are you not ashamed, Miss Maitland, to run away with all your mother's admirers ? Have you no compassion ? Don't you consider that the loss of a lover, after five-and-twenty, is a serious thing ? Here is Sir Harry Windsor, an old tried veteran, on whom we thought we could depend ; even he deserts ; he has eyes for a younger, fairer. I begin to think, indeed, that there is no faith in man. Were not I a bright example of dove-like constancy, the cause would be quite past defending.

During the whole of this time, Henry had been lolling over the back of a sofa, upon which Mrs. and Miss Mor-dant sat. The ladies appeared to be chatting with their usual gaiety ; but

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Henry

Henry wore in his countenance an interested earnestness. He had, during dinner, avoided even to look at Juliana. His conversation was chiefly addressed either to Mr. or Mrs. Mordant, and he appeared to withdraw himself, as much as possible, from general society. When she spoke, he would address something to Mr. Mordant, by whom he sat, seeming unwilling that even the sound of her voice should reach him. How different was this from the conduct she had been accustomed to, from him? There was a time when, if his eyes chanced to meet her's, they would soften into sensibility, or sparkle with pleasure; when he listened to every word she spoke with charmed attention; and watched every look, in order to anticipate her wishes. It was in vain that Albert exerted all his humour to divert her: if she smiled, it was with an unmeaning look, which declared that

that she had not attended to what he said. Her every idea was engrossed by the strange change which she had reason to believe had taken place in Henry's sentiments and affections. Finding herself exceedingly incommoded, and almost put out of temper, by Albert's raillery, who in his usual way began to tease her about her list of slaves, protesting that he was the only man who could see her, and preserve his freedom, she took the first opportunity of slipping out of the room, and retiring to her own, where she could, without interruption, give way to the tide of various reflexion which poured in upon her. It was not now that luxury of tender thought with which she was sometimes wont to indulge her moments of solitude, but painful anxiety, rendered still more painful by a kind of uneasy self-disapprobation, which mixed itself with the remembrance of her past conduct.

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She

She blamed herself for having suffered an attachment to any particular person to gain such an improper ascendancy over her heart, before she was, at least from his own declaration, assured that it was mutual; for having entrusted even Mrs. Maitland and Mary with her secret sentiments; how should she be able to appear before them? Should she affect indifference, and acquire, in their opinions, the character of lightness and insincerity? or, should she openly acknowledge to them the disappointment she had met with, and submit to become an object of pity? How, too, should she behave towards the author of her difficulties? Should she strive to assume the sisterly ease and freedom with which she was used to treat him, or must she, by a reserved distant behaviour, show him, and all the world, how much she was hurt at his? Tortured by these various reflexions,

flexions, she resolved, and re-resolved : at length, summoning to her aid that resolution with which nature has furnished every reasonable creature, though it is so seldom, upon proper occasions, called forth, she determined in earnest to attempt a complete conquest over her unreturned affections, not to study what would best deceive her friends and the world ; but to become in reality what she wished them to think her.

She was sensible that her affection for Henry had increased with the belief that she was the object of his, and having now discovered her error, she hoped, by a proper exertion of her reason, and the assistance of female pride, to correct it, and prevent the wretched consequences of yielding to the enervating power of useless regret and hopeless sorrow.

E 4 Naturally

Naturally warm in her hopes, and ardent in the pursuit of an approved object, she determined to go down, and make the first essay of her returning strength of mind. She descended accordingly, and just as she came to the foot of the stairs, met her maid, who said she was coming to request that she would please to walk down, there being a lady in the drawing-room who particularly wished to see her. Upon entering, Lady Maitland presented to her a tall, plain, showy dressed, affected woman, saying, My dear, this is Mrs. Martin. You know the great esteem I have for her, and will, I hope, receive her as a particular friend.

Ah! what a charming creature! (exclaimed Mrs. Martin.) When an infant, I pronounced that she would be a perfect beauty. Many a half-hour have I nursed her. Yes, Juliana, (said Lady Maitland,) you are, I assure you, under
 very

very particular obligations to Mrs. Martin, the nature of which I may one day or other explain to you.

Our heroine received the stranger with politeness; more she felt no disposition to treat her with. She remembered that, in the mortifying history of her mother's follies, which had been related to her, Miss Henly had been a more than suspected abettor of them all; and she had often heard Mrs. Maitland mention her as a character wholly unfit and unqualified for the care and education of youth, and attributing many of Lady Maitland's deficiencies and inconsistencies to the bad method in which she had been brought up under so improper a governess.

On these accounts, as well as the affected unpleasing appearance she made, Juliana felt little inclination to return her caresses with more than common civility; but, on the contrary, Mrs.

E 5

Martin

Martin appeared quite charmed with her, often repeating that her improvements were even beyond her warmest hopes, and that she had not felt so much pleasure for a long time, as she now enjoyed in that of seeing her.

When tea was removed, Lady Maitland and her old favorite walked into the park, where they had a long tête à tête; and the rest of the company, after sitting a little while, agreed to follow their example. Miss Windsor had, in her own opinion, enjoyed a complete triumph, having attributed all Juliana's too visible dejection of spirits to her chagrin at having Lord Belford and Sir Harry kept from her. She was not, however, satisfied, for seeing that Henry had offered his arm to Mrs. Mordant, and fearing that the Peer should pay the same compliment to Juliana, by whose side he was walking, she carelessly came on the other, and

and suddenly pretending to stumble, caught hold of his arm by way of saving herself. She then affected to limp, saying, she had turned her ankle; upon which his Lordship, whose arm she still held, could not avoid desiring her to accept his assistance, and offering to return back with her, if she found walking painful. She readily accepted the first part of his proposal; but said, she should entirely recover, when she had walked a few yards. Then turning towards her brother, who was a little behind, she called out, Harry, why don't you offer Miss Mor-dant your arm? The Baronet immediately obeyed, and the young lady accepting the civility, our heroine was left to walk alone, Albert not being of the party.

Lord Belford, observing this, instantly requested that she would render his felicity complete, by receiving the

assistance his disengaged arm could afford her. But feeling a strong reluctance to doing any thing that might in the slightest manner encourage his hopes, and persuaded that her resolution was equal to the effort, she answered, that she would by no means encumber his Lordship so unmercifully ; but added, with a smile, since I am left in so forlorn a state, I will claim protection where I have a natural right to expect it. So saying, with that air of easy confidential friendship to be expected between two persons who had spent their infancy together, she walked towards Henry, and laid her hand upon his sleeve.

At that instant, the resolution of both appeared to forsake them. Gently taking hold of her hand, to draw it under his arm, he felt it tremble ; the emotion was contagious, Henry's trembled too. And will you condescend to
accept

accept my protection? (said he, with a softened accent.) She raised her eyes to his; they were full of softness; his sparkled with transport. A glowing vermillion painted her cheek; she cast her fine eyes to the ground, and remained silent.

This short, but expressive scene, did not pass unobserved by Mrs. Mordant. For reasons, which my reader will easily guess, she wished to see Juliana attached to any body, Sir George Maitland excepted: she had been rather surprised, by her extreme coldness to Sir Charles Hastings, and her perfect insensibility to the great offers made her by Lord Belford, and began to fear that she had resolved to act according to her father's wish, and, notwithstanding the indifference with which he had treated her, marry the person fixed upon for her husband by him. It was therefore very agreeable to her to see even the dawn

dawn of a preference given by her to any other, as she hoped it would remove every objection to her daughter's marriage with Sir George. She perceived that her presence alone prevented their explaining to each other the sentiments which their eyes had already pretty clearly declared; and, resolving not to throw any obstacle in the way of what she so earnestly desired, pretended to have forgotten something she had to say to Miss Mordant, and turned back to meet her and Sir Harry Windsor, who were not many yards behind them.

It hath often, and judiciously, been observed, that the conversations of true lovers, like the familiar letters of particular friends, though extremely interesting and delightful to those to whom they are addressed, will in general be flat and unentertaining to a person who is not more than ordinarily concerned
in

in the matter they contain. We will not, therefore, tire our readers with a minute account of what passed upon this occasion, between our heroine and her happy Henry. Let it suffice to say, that it ended in an explicit declaration of love on his side, and all the encouragement on her's, that was consistent with the truest female delicacy, guided by honour, sincerity and affection. He acknowledged that he had struggled hard to overcome a passion which, from the first moment it took possession of his heart, he had considered as hopeless; that he was returning home, fully persuaded that the task was performed; and that he should be able to meet her only with the esteem of a friend, and the tenderness of a brother. But the moment he was informed, upon his arrival at Mordant-Place, that she was in the house, all his lover-like resolution forsook him, and he felt that,

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in spite of the efforts he had made, his heart was weak as ever. Yet, ashamed entirely to give up what had cost him so dear, he determined to preserve at least the appearance of indifference, and if he could not subdue his love, and regain the ease of which it had deprived him, to keep the painful secret his own, and carry it to the grave in silence.

In the course of chat, (for their walk was not a short one,) Juliana asked him, what it was that Mrs. and Miss Mordant were relating to him, while he hung over the sofa upon which they were sitting, with such earnest attention in his looks? to which he answered, that they were telling him the manner in which she had refused the splendid offers made her by Lord Belford, and, as they had cause to believe, by Sir Charles Hastings, inferring from thence, that she must be strongly attached

tached to somebody else, Sir George Maitland they supposed; and wanted to know if there appeared much fondness, (that was Miss Mordant's word) between them, when they were together.

I am angry with myself, (said our heroine) for not having made Miss Mordant and her family easy upon that head, before this time; it was, indeed, but very lately that I discovered the interest they have in my affairs. I immediately requested Lady Maitland to inform them of my resolution to refuse Sir George, whenever he should give me an opportunity; but I fear she has neglected her commission; however, I will take the first occasion of doing so, for I would not willingly give Miss Mordant, or any other person, a moment of unnecessary pain. As for Lord Belford, (continued she,) the fortune I am likely to possess considered,

sidered, I must be strangely mercenary, could I suffer myself to be bribed by any addition that he, or any other person can make to it. If I cannot be happy with eight thousand pounds a year, twenty will not procure me felicity; and, as for a title, I am neither so vain, or weak, as to look up to that as an object of rational estimation.

Mrs. and Miss Mordant (answered Henry) are more surprised at your coldness to Sir Charles Hastings, whom all the world acknowledges to be a pleasing, sensible, and worthy man. Sir Charles Hastings (answered Juliana) is, I believe, all you mention, and I know not any cause why a woman, whose affections are uninfluenced in favor of another, may not be happy with him. A look of grateful transport spoke the feelings of Henry's heart, as she pronounced these words; he pressed her hand to his lips, then to his bosom, and

and was proceeding to thank her for so flattering, so generous an acknowledgement in his favor, when the appearance of Lady Maitland and Mrs. Martin, approaching through a narrow walk which led directly towards them, put a stop to the effusions of his gratitude, and called a blush upon her cheek, from an apprehension that they might have observed enough to awaken a suspicion of what she did not yet wish to be known to any one. Not that she intended to make a particular secret of her attachment to one whom her judgment, as well as inclination, approved; but she well knew, that little right as her own conduct had given her to interfere in, or pretend to regulate that of a daughter, Lady Maitland would, on Lord Belford's account, whose interest she so warmly espoused, oppose her marriage with Henry to the very utmost of her power; and though that power did

did not extend to a possible prevention, she wished, during her stay at Mordant-Place, to avoid giving her any offence, or subjecting herself to be teased with arguments unsupported by reason, (a senseless jargon of noise and prejudice,) which, as they could neither persuade her contrary to her understanding, or influence her in opposition to her affections, she determined, as much as possible, to save herself the pain of attending to; but the moment her eyes met those of her ladyship, the anger that sparkled in them convinced her that it had not escaped her notice.

Juliana, my dear! (said she, in a voice far less soft than that with which she was wont to address her,) I want to speak to you. Mrs. Martin, too, has something to say to you; and as she must leave us to-morrow morning, you will have no other opportunity of attending her. Henry looked unwilling
to

to trust his lovely charge in her hands ; but our heroine, drawing her hand from under his arm, Will you be good enough to excuse me ? (said she, with a smile of sweetness :) you will meet us again at the end of the great walk. Mr. Maitland is too dutiful a son himself, (said Lady Maitland,) to make it necessary to apologize to him for an act of obedience paid to a mother. I will certainly meet you at the end of the great walk, (said he,) and bowing, went up the close one, from whence they had just issued.

He was no sooner out of sight, than Lady Maitland, turning to Juliana, told her, that she had been informing her friend, Mrs. Martin, of the very great offers Lord Belford had lately made her, and that she, as well as herself, was of opinion that she ought by no means to refuse them. She then ran on with a long catalogue of the amazing advantages she

she would reap by accepting them, ending with the observation, that from his age and infirmities it was not likely Lord Belford should live long, and in case of his death, she would be the richest widow in the kingdom, besides possessing the rank and dignity of a Countess, which she would still continue to possess, though she should afterwards marry a man of inferior rank. As for instance now, (continued her Ladyship,) he who is just parted from us, who if it were not for his want of rank and fortune, is really a fine young fellow enough; should you take it into your head to marry him, you would have riches enough for both, might be happy with the man you loved, and rank as a Countess into the bargain. Juliana's heart revolted against a mother who could press such advice upon a daughter. She had scarce command enough of her temper to answer with

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calmness.

calmness. She mentioned something about the sacredness and duties of marriage, which she declared she would not dare to violate, though by so doing she might become a queen, and command all that the world esteems desirable. At the conclusion of which, Lady Maitland and Mrs. Martin burst into a loud laugh, declaring they had not heard such old-fashion stuff a long time, the former begging of her to modernize her notions a little, and not be so completely ridiculous. Mrs. Martin, composing her features into an affected smile of softness, said she was sorry to find a young lady of her beauty and great expectations, likely to suffer so much from the unfortunate imbibement of false principles and common prejudices: adding, that she must have been very ill educated for her situation in life, or she never could have entertained such vulgar and improper notions. Juliana answered

before it was communicated to her or any other, and that as her fortune was sufficiently large, even after its division, to gratify every reasonable desire, she thought herself at liberty, under certain restrictions of prudence and propriety, to make her own election; and that in an affair of such importance, in which the happiness of her whole life was so nearly concerned, she would neither be swayed by avarice or vanity.

Then neither my advice or consent is to be asked, (cried Lady Maitland;) I am not to be consulted; so Mrs. Maitland's approbation is secured, all is well. But mark me, Juliana, my power over you extends perhaps further than you imagine. Observe my words:— you shall never have my consent to marry any but Lord Belford, and upon my consent depends more than you are aware of.

Our

Our heroine assured her that every respect and act of obedience that she could render her, without violating her own principles, or sacrificing her happiness, she might at all times command; but beyond that, she hoped her duty would never be taxed, since further she possessed not the right or power of performance. It is very well, (replied Lady Maitland, with increasing anger;) but be assured that I possess power to enforce your obedience far beyond the narrow limits you mention; and obeyed I will be, or your ingratitude and folly shall be punished as it deserves.—She pronounced these words with so much passion, that Juliana, who had never suspected her of much warmth of temper, and was wholly at a loss to conjecture the meaning of her words, was seriously alarmed, not being able to account for the strange violence and absurdity of her behaviour any way, but

F 2.

by

by supposing that her reason was a little disordered. She well knew that her fortune was left by the late Sir George Maitland, wholly independent of his wife, of whom, indeed, his opinion was too mean to suffer him to intrust either her person or education to her management. She therefore esteemed her threats as little better than ravings. She was at a loss how to answer them, or Mrs. Martin's persuasions, which that officious lady was using to induce her to follow her mother's advice, which she assured her was all for her good, and the very best that could be offered; when drawing near to the spot where she had appointed Henry to meet them, she saw him approach.

Never did the poor, fatigued, half-starved inhabitants of a besieged town, feel more joy, when the distant shouts of a friendly army coming to their relief, first reached their ears, than did
our

our heroine, when the sight of her lover gave her hopes of being delivered from the storm of rage, and unreasonable pretension, to which she had, since he left her, been exposed. Lady Maitland observing the pleasure that brightened in her countenance, exclaimed, It is very well ma'am! act as you think proper: but once more mark my words, if ever you marry that young man, ruin is the consequence; and when it falls upon you, do not blame me, or say, I did not warn you of your danger! So saying, she took hold of Mrs. Martin's arm, and they turned up a path which led into a part of the park, directly opposite to that from whence Henry was approaching; leaving Juliana to relate to him at leisure, the strange arguments, and threats, her Ladyship had been making use of; the latter of which, as she was fully convinced they never would be at-

tended by the power of execution, gave her no other pain, but as they were proofs of the unreasonable violence of her temper, and the weakness of her understanding.

They had not walked far, before they were joined by Mrs. and Miss Mor-dant, Miss Windsor, and Sir Harry. The latter lady immediately began to tell Henry, how she had served Lord Belford. You had scarce left us, (said she,) before I complained to him, that the pain in my ankle was very much increased, and begged that he would excuse my returning back, and pursue his walk. I knew he could not help offering to attend me, which he accordingly did, and I chose not to press him to leave me again, lest he should take me at my word; so back we turned, and I pretended to walk lame, till we came opposite to a seat that stands under a great tree, and then I told him, if it
was

was not disagreeable to him, I would rest a little while; he could not refuse, so down we sat. There did I exert all my conversable abilities in order to amuse him, but in vain; the insensible wretch asked me several times, if I did not find myself sufficiently rested. So as I could not entertain, I resolved to plague him, and therefore told him, that the place in which we were seated, was so pleasant, and his Lordship's company so extremely agreeable, that I felt not the smallest inclination to move; and if he had no objection, we would continue there, till the rest of the party had finished their walk. Do you know, (proceeded she,) that he had the rudeness to ask me, if I was not afraid of catching cold, and to discover actual signs of impatience; during the whole time we were together, he never said one civil thing, though I more than once endeavoured to force some out of him,

F 4

him,

him; and the moment this company joined us, he slipped away, and went into the house by himself, actually in a downright ill-humour.

It is a great pity, (answered Henry,) that so much trouble should be thrown away; but I fear you gave yourself too much; had you taken less, you might have succeeded better, for we men like a little trouble ourselves. You are an impertinent creature, (replied Miss Windsor;) however, you are secure from that inconvenience, nobody will give themselves much trouble about a poor younger brother. You do well enough just for creditable dangles, but any thing further, you have no kind of chance for. Then we are in that respect, (answered he,) more fortunate than our elders, since we are less liable to be teased by the giddy, or duped by the artful. And pray in which of these two classes do you rank me? (said Miss Windsor.)

Windfor.) Certainly not among the artful, (answered he :) art implies something concealed, something that is unsuspected, and likely to promote a design. Thank ye, friend, thank ye, (exclaimed Miss Windfor;) if you have not the rank and fortune of an elder brother, you at least possess as much easy assurance as the best of them.

This kind of chat brought them back to the house, at the door of which, Sir Harry Windfor's coach being in waiting, that gentleman and his sister took leave, in doing which, the latter shook Mrs. and Miss Mordant by the hand, telling them, she should expect to see them very soon, and offering the same mark of friendliness to Henry, added, and if he behaves well, you may bring this saucy creature with you. She was then stepping into the coach, without taking the least notice of Juliana, when her brother, who attributed her rude-

ness to inattention, gently pulling her back, said, My dear you have forgot to invite Miss Maitland; upon which, making our heroine a very slight curtsy, she replied, that she hoped Mrs. Mordant knew she was always glad to see any one that made a part of her family. So saying she got into the carriage, which, as soon as the master of it had placed himself by her side, drove away. It was no sooner out of sight, than Miss Mordant turning to Juliana, asked her, if she did not think Miss Windfor a remarkably sensible, agreeable woman? I do not think her remarkably any thing, (answered she :) except, (rejoined Henry, who had remarked her behaviour to Juliana, during the whole day,) rude, envious, vain, and affected; those, in my opinion, are the leading traits in her character, and if they are compatible with understanding and elegance of manners, Miss Windfor

for may possess both. Oh fie! (cried Miss Mordant,) how can you be so ungrateful, when you know you are one of her greatest favourites. !

While she was yet speaking, they were joined by Lord Belford, Mr. Mordant, and Albert. The latter immediately enquired for Miss Windfor, and upon hearing that she was gone home, exclaimed, Aye, Maitland, now you are here she cares for nobody else under the rank of a Viscount. When you are absent, and we have no titles among us, I come in for a part of her favours, but this whole day I have in vain watched for a single smile; they were all divided between Lord Belford and you. Miss Windfor is a fine woman, (said Lord Belford,) but her charms begin to wear rather a matronly appearance; she would look better as my Lady, or Mrs. than as Miss. Then, (replied Albert, in an audible whisper,) I believe I can answer

for its being in your Lordship's power to give her that advantage, as soon as you think proper. For shame, Albert, (cried Mrs. Mordant, smiling.) To be sure, (said her daughter,) she is not quite so much a girl as she was twenty years since, not that I believe she is herself at all sensible of the change. But sensible of it she shortly must be, (answered Henry;) wrinkles and grey hairs tell unequivocal truths.

They were by this time seated in the drawing-room, where Henry taking out his pocket-case and pencil, wrote the following lines, which he presented to Mrs. Mordant.

SONNET to the LOOKING-GLASS:

In the Character of a Beauty on the Verge of
Forty.

COME, faithful friend, my toilet grace;
Thee truth attends, and flatterers fly;
Still thou presentest nature's face,
'Tho' vain self-love averts the eye.

This

This hour with pleas'd regard I gaze,
Fresh bloom and chearful smiles appear;
The next I start in coy amaze,
For ah! approaching age is there.

In thee I read that spring is past,
That gaudy summer's end is near;
That autumn grave, approaches fast,
And winter soon will close the year.

Ah! ere that hour, be every folly fled;
So wisdom's sacred crown shall grace my hoary
head!

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXV.

THE VISIT.

THE heart of Juliana was sincere and open, she possessed real delicacy, but despised the affectation of it, as she did indeed every species of that disgusting quality. Her acquaintance with Henry had commenced with her earliest knowledge of herself, his character was in every respect what she approved, his manners were particularly agreeable to her, she respected his understanding, and admired his person. In short, she loved him, and had every possible reason to believe that he returned her affection; she was opulent, and independent, nor was there any obstacle to their union strong enough, to render

render its completion a matter of doubt or hesitation. Thus situated, she did not scruple to acknowledge to the lover her heart had chosen, that he wholly possessed it. Nor did she absolutely reject his suit, when declaring that he should not enjoy a moment of solid peace till his happiness was put out of even a possibility of doubt, he earnestly pressed her to become his without waiting the four tedious months which intervened between that, and the time of her coming of age; proposing that they should, till the arrival of that period, reside at Furze-Hill with his mother, whose consent was, by the late Sir George's will, alone necessary to her marriage. Though she had not quite promised this, she had consented to return to Furze-Hill immediately after the races were over, to which she thought herself obliged to attend Mrs. Mordant, who made a point of enlarging her party as much as possible.

possible. She was not indeed sorry to think of leaving Mordant-Place, which the particularity of Lord Belford, and the ill-humour of Lady Maitland rendered less agreeable to her, than it would otherwise have been. The only circumstance which caused her any regret was the thought of leaving Lady Frances Seward, who every day became more dear to her. To this valued friend she had acknowledged her attachment to Henry, and at her particular request had introduced him to her at one of their breakfast meetings in the bathing-house. Henry was charmed with the noble simplicity and polished gracefulness of Lady Frances's manners, and she, with a sigh, acknowledged that he appeared as worthy of her lovely young friend as any man could be. And promised, that as soon as they were settled in a domestic way, and all the hurry and ceremonies consequent upon a marriage

were

were over, she would make them a long and friendly visit, during which she hoped to become acquainted with Mrs. Maitland and Mary, and to induce them all to return with her to Clareville-House, which she said, was generally thought pleasant, and which she would do every thing in her power to render so upon that occasion.

When a woman feels a real affection for her lover, and has acknowledged that affection, she will find it difficult to refuse him any thing, which is not forbidden by honour or reason. Her acknowledgment in his favour encourages him to press with fervour what he would otherwise scarce venture to mention, while it weakens her power of resistance, and renders compliance almost an act of duty. It is not therefore surprising, that having so little to oppose to the warm intreaties of one so confessedly dear to her, our heroine should

should in the course of a few days be persuaded to consent to all he proposed, which she did, however, upon condition that it was perfectly approved of by Msr. Maitland. Should that be the case, it was agreed that she should remain only one week at Mordant-Place after their return from the races; that Henry should at the expiration of that time come back, and conduct her home; and that a few days after her arrival there, their marriage should take place.

Every one at Mordant-Place, except Lady Maitland and Lord Belford, did and said all in their power to persuade Henry to accompany them upon their intended excursion; but rich in hope, the impatient lover was not to be persuaded to any thing that might for a single day postpone the completion of it. The very morning after he had obtained the above mentioned promise from her upon whom his happiness

much depended, he set out for Furze-Hill, in order to obtain his mother's consent to the arrangement he had planned, and prepare every thing necessary for his nuptials.

Lady Maitland appeared highly pleased by Henry's departure, nor was Lord Belford less satisfied. The former embraced every opportunity of teasing Juliana about the Peer, constantly representing the great advantages she would gain by a marriage with him, and regularly concluding with declaring that she would one day repent her folly, and wish she had followed the advice of her friends, without obliging them to exert their authority in order to bring her to a sense of her duty, which if she continued obstinate, they were determined to do. Our heroine being convinced that she had not the smallest power over her actions, heard these threats with no more concern than every instance.

instance of her Ladyship's folly gave her. She made little reply to them, only begging that she would not continue to press her upon a subject to which she could not attend without disgust, or request what, however painful to her, she must absolutely refuse.

Finding, upon enquiry, that Lady Maitland had neglected to inform Miss Mordant of her resolution to resign Woodburn-Manor to Sir George, she took the first opportunity which presented itself for giving her that agreeable piece of intelligence, and the extreme satisfaction which appeared in her countenance while she was receiving it, convinced our heroine that the account she had heard of her expectations from the young Baronet were true. The sudden pleasure which this information afforded her, opened Miss Mordant's heart, naturally close and reserved; she talked a great deal more than she was usually

usually accustomed to do, and among other communications, told Juliana, that they should not be at home again, for near a month after the races; that it was intended to make a considerable tour, and to go, as by accident, to Belford-Abbey, where they were to remain at least a fortnight, and be entertained in the most sumptuous manner. Among other amusements, they were to have a splendid fête; that orders had already been sent down to prepare for it; in short, (continued she,) we shall spend a most delightful fortnight, for Belford-Abbey is one of the most beautiful places in the kingdom, and stands in the midst of a very genteel neighbourhood, which will, upon this occasion, be all gathered together; nor will any thing be wanting that can possibly afford pleasure, for nothing can equal Lord Belford's taste but his magnificence. But dear Miss Maitland, do not

say a word about it, you were not to know any thing of the affair; indeed the principal design of it was to surprise you. Lord Belford only consulted your mother upon it, and she told me in confidence; neither Mrs. Mordant, Albert, Miss Windsor, or Sir Harry, have heard a syllable of his intention.

You must pardon me if I cannot make you any such promise, (answered Juliana;) I am resolved not to make one of the party to the races, and must beg leave to declare the true cause why I decline to go; otherwise Mrs. Mordant might think me rude and capricious; but I will mention it only to her and my mother, nor will tell them by what means I acquired my information. Miss Mordant said every thing she could think on that was likely to induce her to accompany them; not that she particularly wished for her presence at the races, where she rather feared her as an
over-

overpowering rival, but she feared her staying behind would put an end to the Belford-Abbey scheme, and heartily wished she had possessed caution enough to keep the design from her knowledge, as Lady Maitland had requested her to do. Finding it in vain to attempt to overcome her objections to the visit at Belford, she begged that she would be as good as her word in not telling from whom she received the information; though, (added she,) as Lady Maitland has informed none but me, she will not want to be told; however, I shall take care, Miss Maitland, how I next intrust you with a secret.

Miss Mordant had no sooner left our heroine, than she began to consider in what manner she should dispose of herself during the time that her mother and friends would be absent. At first she thought of returning to Furze-Hill; but delicacy, or something which she
chose

chose to distinguish by that name, absolutely forbid it. The next plan which presented itself, was that of passing it with Lady Frances Seward, and to this, as Sir Charles Hastings was to be of the party to the races, she foresaw no prevention, unless one should arise on her Ladyship's part, which she did not expect; it was however necessary to be certain of this, as she had no doubt but the strongest objections would be made to the impropriety of her remaining alone at Mordant-Place. She therefore informed her, the following morning, of the discovery she had made, and her consequent resolution not to make one in the intended excursion. Of this Lady Frances intirely approved, telling her young friend that she should greatly have blamed her, resolved as she was upon rejecting Lord Belford's addresses, if she had given him so good an opportunity of teasing her, and as the world might

might possibly think, laying her under obligations for entertainments given on her account, though not with her consent. Then looking at her with an inviting smile, Where does my dear Juliana mean to spend her time while the family at Mordant-Place are absent? Will Lady Frances Seward permit me to pass it with her at Marley? (answered our heroine.) Sir Charles is engaged to accompany Mr. Mordant, therefore my being with her can be no impropriety. And will you then make me so happy? (cried Lady Frances.) I shall be very happy indeed! and, which I had little cause to expect, owe that happiness to Lord Belford. More was not necessary; Juliana returned highly pleased with the thoughts of spending the next fortnight with Lady Frances, rather than at the races, which she would greatly have preferred, had the visit to Belford-Abbey never been projected.

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The only person she found in the breakfast room upon her return, was Mrs. Mordant. She took the opportunity of her being alone, to let her know that having, by a particular accident, discovered that they were to be surprised into a visit to Belford-Abbey in the course of their intended excursion, she was determined to avoid so unpleasant a circumstance, by remaining behind, and passing the time of their absence with Lady Frances Seward, who would be quite alone, as Sir Charles Hastings was to make one of their party. I need not ask how you came by your intelligence, (said Mrs. Mordant,) I have no doubt but Eliza was your informer; for though she is in general reserved, and rather silent, she never could keep any thing that resembled a secret: not that Lady Maitland has made much of this, for to Eliza I know she has told the whole design; upon me she has conferred

ferred the same favour; from Albert she can keep nothing; and I have great reason to believe, that Miss Windsor, if not Sir Harry, are upon this occasion made confidants; so that you are the only one of the party that would have been surpris'd, had the scheme been put into execution. Juliana blushed for her mother's weakness, there was scarce an hour in which she had not cause to blush on this account. Mrs. Mordant observing her confusion, politely added, You know, my dear Miss Maitland, it was of no consequence to the intention who was made acquainted with it, provided it remained a secret to you; indeed I was half inclined to tell you myself, for I did not think it quite fair that you should be so deceived; but I seldom intermeddle in their plans; in general Lady Maitland and the young folks project, and I follow the stream.

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Your

Your wish to have me informed upon this occasion, (said Juliana,) proves that you are of my opinion with respect to the impropriety of my going to Belford, therefore I am sure you will have goodness enough to join with me in persuading my mother to consent to my staying behind. Just as she pronounced these words Lady Maitland entered, and being informed of our heroine's resolution and the cause of its being taken, flew into a more violent passion than either of those present had ever beheld her in. Mrs. Mordant said every thing that she thought might tend to calm her rage, at the same time declaring, that as Miss Maitland had resolved never to marry Lord Belford, it would be very wrong to make him such a visit.

Resolved not to marry him! (cried Lady Maitland,) she is resolved upon no such thing; she will yet be glad to marry him. Nay, I will venture to say she
shall

shall marry him. These words excited a smile from Mrs. Mordant, and a look of concern from Juliana, who could not reconcile them to any thing reasonable; and really began to fear, both from them and the violence of her agitations, that her mother was subject to short fits of insanity. At length her Ladyship, after upbraiding our heroine with obstinacy, folly, ingratitude, and undutifulness, left the room, telling her that she might upon this occasion follow her own inclinations, but at her return she would soon convince her that it was both her duty and interest to be guided by her's.

During the two days which intervened between this conversation and that fixed upon for the beginning of their journey, Lady Maitland was too busy in her preparations for the races to have much time for reproaches and ill-humour; the arrival of her new dress was in every

G 3

respect.

He approached her with a respectful and tender, but real melancholy air. How good you are, (said he,) my dear Miss Maitland, to favour my aunt with your company ! How happy will she be during my absence ! He spoke the last words with a strong emphasis, and accompanied them with a sigh, which seemed to issue from the bottom of his heart. I am happy, Sir, (answered Juliana,) in the opportunity which the absence of Mr. Mordant's family affords me of giving myself the honour to pass a few days with Lady Frances. I hope you will have a great deal of amusement at Stanton.—She was proceeding, when, suddenly interrupting her,—I am not sufficiently at ease, (said he,) to find much enjoyment in any thing. But may you be happy ! If my best wishes could contribute to your felicity, you would never feel a single pain. So saying, he bowed, and hurried from her in much
 apparent

she should want during her stay there, they were placed in a caravan box, and orders given to her footman to bring them to her in the afternoon. She had taken leave of the family the preceding evening, had sincerely wished them all those pleasures of which she felt not the smallest wish to partake, and was just setting out for the bathing house, where Lady Frances had promised to meet, and from thence conduct her home, when she was met by Sir Charles Hastings. His looks were paler than usual, and very grave; she had not seen him since their meeting at the place to which she was now going, and the change his countenance had undergone was very perceptible. She could not look at him without concern: ah! (she inwardly exclaimed,) how can I hope for the friendship of Lady Frances, while I destroy the happiness of one so dear to her.

wife of her happy Henry, she should endeavour to harden herself against the reflections which the envy of the world would probably cast upon her, and contented with the conscious rectitude of her own heart, joyfully consent to what she hoped would insure her happiness, though it would not place her in the sphere of life she had a right to move in. Mary expressed the highest delight in the thought of calling her sister, and the approaching happiness of her favorite brother. She intreated her to shorten her absence as much as possible, declaring that she should think of nothing else till her return to Furze-Hill. In short, her letter breathed the warm spirit of youthful friendship, uncorrupted by that mean and selfish disposition, which, unable to view even qualities which most excite esteem without jealousy and envy, those certain destroyers of amity and affection, render
female

female attachments so generally weak and short lived. The epistle from Henry was such as might be expected from such a man, in such a situation. He concluded by informing her that he should without fail be at Mordant-Place upon the appointed day; and that his mother and sister would meet her half way upon her return, at a very good Inn, where they might be well accommodated for the night, instead of fatiguing her, by performing the whole journey in one day. To this Juliana felt no objection, every place, in the company of those she so much loved, appearing to her safe and pleasant.

During the first week of her visit to Lady Frances, nothing occurred that can furnish matter for relation. Every hour increased that esteem and admiration which she before thought scarce capable of increase, nor could any thing but the hope of again seeing her beloved

friends at Furze-Hill have reconciled her to the thought of so soon quitting a society in which her heart was become so deeply interested. Lady Frances was one day comparing the retired, still life her lovely young friend led with her, with the gay bustle in which she supposed her mother and the Mordants were engaged; and concluded with saying, there are few at your age, and fitted as you are to shine in the first parties, who would have made such a choice. Yet, (replied Juliana,) my dear Lady Frances is not among those who ought to wonder at such a conduct; are not you younger than Mrs. Mordant or Lady Maitland? yet while they pursue every thing that bears the name of amusement with avidity, you shrink back, and appear to avoid even those that press themselves upon you. Ah! my dear Miss Maitland, (answered her Ladyship,) you will, I trust, never experience

perience such disappointments as have given me a disgust to the world, and changed a temper, naturally gay and active, into the reverse of both. I will in a few words account to you for this change, though in so doing I shall lay open an affair which is a secret to Sir Charles Hastings himself. I will not apologize to my fair friend for the follies and imprudencies I have been guilty of, I know her candour will view them in the most favourable light, and the censure I have deserved I must submit to bear.

My father, the late Earl of Clareville, was a man who possessed many worthy qualities; he was sincere in his attachments, generous to his dependents, and a strict observer of the rules of what the world calls honour, which he never violated himself, or suffered any one with whom he was in any degree connected, to infringe with impunity.

nity. He had in the younger part of his life served in the army with considerable reputation, and would probably have risen to the first command had he not been detached from the pursuit of military glory by his passion for my mother, of whom he was excessively fond, and whose slightest wish was, throughout the whole time during which they lived together, an absolute law to him.

This unbounded influence she had obtained over his affections, partly by her uncommon beauty, accomplishments and understanding, and partly by her high rank, and the consideration of the very ancient and illustrious family from which she was descended; she being one of the daughters of the late, and sister to the present Duke of Roxford, an alliance with whom, exclusive of her extraordinary merits, flattered his pride, of which he possessed a much larger share than

than the most exalted and splendid condition of human life can justify or even excuse. Indeed excessive pride and boundless ambition were the leading traits in his character, and not only shaded his better qualities, but to those most near to him, and who had a natural claim to be benefited by them, rendered them absolutely useless.

The great interest of my mother's family, together with his own, raised him to the first posts in the late administration, of which his father-in-law was considered as the leader and principal support; and the integrity and ability with which he filled them, acquired him at once the approbation of his sovereign, and the confidence of his fellow-citizens, though the extreme haughtiness of his manners disqualified him for ever from obtaining their affection.

In the course of the ten first years of his marriage, my mother presented him
with

with five children, of whom I was the youngest; two girls died in their infancy, which was matter of little regret to him, he having placed his whole hopes and affections upon his son, who was the eldest, and in every respect a most promising boy, both in person and understanding. The care and superintendence of his education divided his attention even with politics and the duties of his office; the best masters in every branch of polite attainment were engaged to instruct him, and a gentleman, whose abilities, learning, and knowledge were in the very first class, was induced by a more than commonly generous establishment, to take upon himself the character of his preceptor. As for my sister and myself he concerned himself very little about us; indeed we were almost strangers to him; for when his time was not taken up in the duties of his post, and attendance at
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the house of Peers or St. James's, he was almost constantly surrounded by company, so that we were entirely left to the care and regulations of our mother, whose attentions to our health, comfort, and improvements were unremitting, and whose tenderness made us amends for the want of it in our father.

As my brother grew up, the hopes of my father, as well as every part of our family, were exceedingly flattered by the favourable accounts given of him by his tutor; the rapid improvements he made in his various studies, the fineness of his person, clearness of his understanding, and agreeableness of his manners. Lord Clareville already beheld him in idea a minister of state, the favourite of his sovereign, the admiration of the court, and raised to the highest dignities which rank, fortune, and reputation have power to bestow. In order to insure, as far as human prudence

dence can influence events, his future consequence in life, he entered into an agreement with my uncle, who by the death of his father was become Duke of Roxford, by which it was resolved, that as soon as they became of a proper age, a marriage should take place between my brother and his Grace's daughter, who being his only child, and heiress to his vast possessions, was a circumstance to which he looked forward as to the completion of his almost every wish.

As the young people advanced in age, a growing attachment appeared between them, which was attentively watched and encouraged by their respective parents; our families were almost continually together, and every hour that my brother could spare from his studies, was devoted to little entertainments and parties of amusement, in which my sister and I always shared. My mother, who

who was extremely fond of her niece, had fixed her heart upon the completion of the projected marriage, as strongly as my father; and in all the parties that were made in compliment to my cousin, she carefully excluded every young man or woman in the neighbourhood of Clareville, (which abounds with the families of gentlemen of fortune,) who were likely in the smallest degree to rival either her or my brother in the opinion of the other. There was, indeed, as little danger of such an event as could well be desired, for I have already observed, that he was more than commonly amiable, and she was one of the most accomplished young women in the kingdom, possessed of an excellent understanding, great sweetness of temper, and though her person could not be styled beautiful, it was perfectly agreeable and pleasing.

During

During the time my brother spent abroad, a frequent and regular correspondence was kept up between them. It was resolved that at his return the marriage should immediately take place. His letters expressed the most ardent impatience for the arrival of this wished-for period; and Lady Jane, though remarkable for the delicacy, and almost reservedness of her general manners, openly acknowledged that it would give her sincere pleasure to see him again. As for my father, so impatient was he to behold the completion of an event which he considered not only as a very great present honour and advantage to his family, but as a step which must certainly lead his son to the highest situations a subject could enjoy, that fearful lest any unforeseen accident should frustrate his hopes, he resolved upon recalling him some months sooner than had been.

been agreed upon when he quitted the kingdom.

My brother readily obeyed the welcome summons, and in a few weeks after it had been received, arrived at Clareville, to the inexpressible joy of his parents, and the great pleasure of the whole neighbourhood, by whom he was generally beloved. Every preparation for his intended nuptials had been made previous to his return; an elegant seat which my uncle resigned to him, was fitted up in the most superb style, and the grounds around it laid out with all the beauty and variety of which they were capable. A house of my father's in St. James's Square, had likewise been prepared for their reception, the writings, &c. were ready drawn, and nothing neglected that could facilitate an event from which so much happiness was expected.

I have

I have often thought that the passionate impatience with which my father had expected this union, the unwearied pains he had taken to insure it, and the excessive pleasure he expressed upon its taking place exactly according to his own plan, is a most striking instance, among many I have since remarked, which tends to prove, how very ill the wisest and most prudent are qualified to ascertain, with any tolerable degree of certainty, what will insure their own felicity. Often the attainment of our wishes in its effects, destroys the object which they too ardently desired to secure ; a lesson, which were it possible for a man ever to profit by the experience of others, should teach us moderation in our most favourite pursuits, and submission to the will and destinations of that perfectly wise and good Being, who so often renders disappointment a blessing, and not less frequently punishes

punishes our folly in its gratification. The latter of these was eventually his case with my father. For so perfectly satisfied was my brother with the situation in which his marriage had placed him, so happy in the enjoyment of domestic felicity, and the exertions of private benevolence, that no efforts of his father's could awaken in his bosom a single spark of ambition, or the least desire of distinguishing himself in public life. His wife, of whom he was passionately fond, was as much attached to retirement and domestic pleasures as himself; they passed almost their whole time in the country, seldom spending more than three or four months every winter in London, and at the conclusion of that short season returning to the enjoyments of nature and reason with increased eagerness and satisfaction.

It was in vain that my father represented to his son the extreme folly, as
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he esteemed it, of which he was guilty in thus neglecting the opportunities he possessed of rendering himself of the first importance in the state, opportunities which the strength of his abilities, and the extent of his information, so well qualified him to embrace with every possible degree of advantage to himself, and glory to his family; my brother answered that he was perfectly satisfied with the family honours already acquired by his ancestors, honours, which no action of his should ever tarnish; that he found in the various duties of private life sufficient employment for the abilities which nature had endowed him with; and as he had no doubt, but that his native country, which no man could love more sincerely than himself, would at all times produce men equally and much better fitted to preserve and multiply her national glories, he did not, as a good citizen, think

think himself obliged to relinquish the happy plan of domestic felicity he had laid down, and was beginning to enjoy ; but on the contrary, that he believed himself to be more effectually serving her true interests by setting an example of moral rectitude, extensive benevolence, and an active and regular discharge of all the important duties of private life.

Little as my father could urge in reply to arguments founded upon truth and reason, he was by no means satisfied with his son's conduct ; on the contrary, it disappointed all his most favourite hopes, to the fulfilling of which he looked upon his marriage only as a leading step. But his mortification was greatly increased, or rather was completed, by his want of children, a circumstance which so strongly affected his mind, that he lost all pleasure in the possession of those dignities, for the acquisition of which his youth had been

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spent

spent in toil, and his manhood in care and anxiety. He suddenly threw up his post, quitted the court in disgust, and retired to Clareville, declaring it as his unalterable resolution never more to visit those scenes of delusion, false greatness, and fancied enjoyment.

My mother used every means in her power to divert his chagrin, and render his retirement chearful and pleasing: but though he always preserved towards her the utmost tenderness and respect, a gloomy, unsocial temper of mind had taken absolute possession of him, which intirely unfitted him for the enjoyment either of solitude or domestic comfort; the sight of my brother, or his lady, always appeared to give him pain; and as neither my sister, or myself, could transmit his name to posterity, he regarded us with the most perfect indifference.

Much

Much of Harriet's time was passed at the house of our brother, where I, who was seven years younger, was sometimes permitted to accompany her, a privilege which the agreeable manner of living there, (the cheerfulness, elegance, and social freedom of which formed a most pleasing contrast to the stately gloom which prevailed at Clareville,) rendered at all times very acceptable. Among the agreeable and well informed people of both sexes who visited my brother, the person who appeared most particularly to possess his friendship was the late Sir Philip Hastings, a character adorned by every quality that could dignify a man, or distinguish a gentleman. The agreeableness of his person and manners first attracted the approbation of my sister, which a more intimate knowledge of his virtues improved into esteem and admiration. Her admiration was returned, a mutual liking was

H 2 quickly

quickly softened and refined into love ; which for some time was carefully concealed by both, even from each other, one being actuated by motives of delicacy and reserve, the other by prudence and fear. He well knew the character of the Earl of Clareville, and neither his rank or fortune, the latter being very small, could afford him just ground to hope, that one whose pride and ambition had in every instance been the ruling motives of his actions, would so far deviate from them, as to bestow his daughter, the presumptive heiress to a large portion of his vast wealth, upon one so much beneath her in both. In despite of the constraint my sister imposed upon herself, of the care she took to conceal the favourable thoughts she entertained of the Baronet from every one, they were observed by Lord Seward, who at the same time equally remarked the more than common attention paid
to

to her by his friend. His knowledge of Sir Philip was the most intimate. They had travelled together, and their friendship, which similarity of manners and sentiments had begun, was cemented by virtue and true honour. There was nothing my brother would more have wished, than to have seen Harriet the wife of his friend. And the very little regard his father had ever shown either for her or me, encouraged him to hope, that if he was acquainted with his excellent character, and found that the affections of his daughter were absolutely engaged, he might be prevailed upon by the intreaties of himself and his mother, whose interest he knew would easily be obtained, to consent to their marriage.

In this hope he questioned his friend upon the discovery he believed himself to have made, in such a manner as induced him to acknowledge the whole truth. He declared that the regard he

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felt

felt for Lady Harriet, was such as he never had, or could entertain for any other; but conscious of the small pretensions he had to hope for the blessing of her hand with the consent and approbation of her family, he had resolved never to mention his unfortunate passion to her, or any other, but to endeavour by absence, and a proper exertion of resolution, to conquer an attachment, which, if preserved, must destroy his future peace.

My brother assured Sir Philip that nothing in his power should be omitted that could in any degree contribute to promote his happiness and that of his sister, by whom he had reason to believe his merits had not been wholly overlooked. The Baronet was enraptured by the faintest ray of hope; he seized the hand of Lord Seward, and in terms of the warmest gratitude thanked him for the unexpected, and as he esteemed it,
unre-

unreturnable proof of friendship he had given him. Their conversation ended in my brother's promising, that if he was so fortunate as to obtain Harriet's consent, he would immediately introduce him to his father; and that nothing should be left unattempted that might afford the smallest hope of obtaining his approbation.

An acknowledgment of my sister's regard for the Baronet was not difficult to obtain. Encouraged by the discovery of her brother's sentiments, she easily prevailed upon herself to declare her own, and it was resolved upon that an early opportunity should be embraced, to request my mother's consent to the proposed marriage, and her interest with my father; for upon the great influence she enjoyed with him, and the still greater which her son possessed over her, the whole hopes of the lovers depended.

H 4

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In this state were my sister's expectations when an express arrived from Clareville with an account of the sudden death of my mother, an event which filled us all with inexpressible sorrow, and for the present banished even from the mind of my sister every thought but of her loss. She set out immediately, accompanied by my brother, his lady, and myself, for the seat of mourning, where upon our arrival we found my father in a state nearly bordering upon distraction, nor for several days after the funeral of our beloved parent were we in a proper condition to offer comfort, or he to receive it. Our loss was indeed very great, for she was the tenderest of mothers, and by the kind indulgence with which she treated us, compensated for the want of it in our father; and we feared, and indeed had every cause to fear, that the want of her protection would make a very un-
pleasing

pleasing change in our situation. But the person who had most cause to be apprehensive of this was poor Harriet, whose attachment to her lover was so greatly strengthened since the knowledge of her brother's sentiments had afforded her room to hope that it might possibly be permitted by parental authority, that she could no more endure the thought of withdrawing her affections from, than she could now hope for her father's consent to bestow them upon him.

Our family had never been accustomed to live in habits of intimacy with those that resided near it, though many of them were of fortune and consequence: the excessive pride of my father had rendered it impossible for him to mix agreeably with any who were at all his inferiors, in what he esteemed of so much importance, rank. Nor were the independent and sensible by any

H 5 means,

means, fond of exposing themselves to his contemptuous neglect or supercilious civility. The amiable politeness of my mother's manners was the only charm which could, at any time, induce persons of this description to visit Clareville, and as the Earl had too much understanding to be pleased with common flattery, our house was seldom crowded with guests. It was, indeed, a favorite maxim with him, which, when my sister or I have expressed a wish to mix rather more with some young people in the neighbourhood, he would often repeat for our instruction, that solitude was always preferable to unequal society. This stately solitude we had indeed now the full enjoyment of. Those who were not permitted to share his pleasures, pressed not to partake of or console his sorrows; so that except occasional visits from persons of distinction, we rarely saw or conversed with

with any creature except my brother and his lady, who, out of mere compassion, seldom suffered a week to pass without spending at least one day with us. We were now become necessary to my father, not as objects of affection, but as human creatures, with whom he did not think it beneath his dignity to converse. Having no longer my mother to support his spirits, it became our constant care to amuse him: our endeavours were indeed often unsuccessful; but he found it more agreeable to have us with him than to be alone, and therefore, as he did not esteem our health or inclinations of the least consequence, it was his declared pleasure that we never should leave his apartment together, nor was one of us permitted to be absent for more than half an hour at a time, so that we were deprived of the only enjoyment we had

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hoped

hoped for, that of sometimes visiting Lord Seward.

To this unpleasant confinement I submitted with patience, but to my sister it was quite intolerable. A great part of her nights, and almost every moment that she was absent from my father's apartments, was spent in tears. She had few opportunities of complaining to my brother, but her pale cheek and languid eyes too expressively declared the state of her mind, at once depressed by a sense of the evils she suffered, and the happiness she believed herself to have lost. We had spent more than two months in this situation, which was every day rendered more irksome, by the increasing gloom and sourness of my father's temper, and were sitting in his dressing-room during one of his frequent fits of silence, which would often last for several hours together; when his valet announced my brother.

brother. My sister and I arose, with our usual alacrity, to receive him, for his visits were our only pleasure; when, judge of our surprise and her joy, when we beheld him enter followed by Sir Philip Hastings. He apologized to my father for the liberty he had taken in introducing his friend, who, he said, he had met in his way to Clareville, and could not, without a breach of common politeness, avoid requesting that he would accompany him. My father received the Baronet, who he had often seen, with a reserved kind of half-civility, during the first part of the day, addressing his whole conversation to his son, and seldom honouring him even with a look. Such treatment would, in other circumstances, quickly have put an end to his visit; for he was a man of spirit, and, notwithstanding the smallness of his fortune, had ever preserved the most perfect independence.

But

But he had his own reasons for bearing it upon the present occasion, without the least appearance of resentment, and even courting every possible opportunity of gaining the smallest degree of his attention. By degrees, my father began to grow less reserved, and before the conclusion of the evening, the good sense, respect, and easy politeness of Sir Philip's behaviour and address, so far won upon the little remains of social kindness his temper retained, that he not only entered into conversation with him in a manner tolerably chearful, but, upon his rising to take leave, invited him to repeat his visit, saying, he should be glad to see him as often as would suit his convenience and inclination. A condescension which the Baronet appeared to receive with the most grateful sensibility, and of which, he assured the Earl, he should seize every opportunity to avail himself.

During

During the whole day, Sir Philip had neither found, or apparently sought, an opportunity of privately addressing my sister. He had taken no other notice of her than such as politeness demanded. A few expressive looks were all that distinguished the lover. His appearance was, notwithstanding, matter of extreme pleasure to her, and the distinction with which my father had favored him, flattered her with the most agreeable hopes. These hopes were strengthened by the increasing friendship he expressed for him, every visit he paid him appearing to heighten his esteem, and the pleasure he felt in his society. His invitations became more pressing, and the Baronet was seldom more than three or four successive days absent from Clareville. In the course of these constant visits he frequently found opportunities for holding short conversations with Harriet, unobserved by my father; they

they likewise often wrote to each other; all their former hopes were revived; and it was agreed that my brother should, at his next visit, propose the marriage.

The Baronet had just left us, after having concerted with my sister the plan they thought would be most likely to insure the success of their hopes; we were agreeably entertaining ourselves, she with the prospect of recovered freedom and happiness, and I with the expectation of a little temporary relief from confinement, during the gaieties of her wedding, my father being laid down to sleep, when we heard an equipage stop at the door, and in a few minutes a servant announced the Earl of Belford, and his son, Lord Easure. The Earl was an old and intimate friend of my father's, but his son he had never seen since he was a mere boy, he having been wholly educated abroad. They
were

were received with the greatest cordiality, and, notwithstanding that the latter was one of the most trifling and finished coxcombs I ever beheld, my father treated him with even distinguished attention, introducing him to my sister and me, as a person to whom it was his wish that we should pay every possible civility.

The young gentleman was not only very plain in his person, weak in his understanding, and affected in his manners, but a great pretender to wit and humour, though nature had absolutely denied him the smallest portion of either. We were at first diverted with his folly, and in a situation so uniformly dull as ours, any thing that could divert was acceptable. It was his practice, while our fathers were conversing together in a different room, or a distant part of that in which we were seated, to entertain us with long
accounts

accounts of his adventures abroad. Himself, and some lady of great beauty and consequence, were generally the hero and heroine of his tales, and we were usually given to understand, that he was extremely admired by the female world, and had achieved many conquests, which would have done honour to the most accomplished follower of the Chesterfieldian system. Indeed, had all the facts of which he was pleased to inform us been authentic, he would well have merited the severest punishment the laws of offended justice and humanity could have had power to inflict; but, as we did not apprehend that it was quite so easy to seduce the affections of a virtuous married woman, deceive the vigilance of a careful father, or scale the walls of a convent, as he represented, we gave him credit for the inventions of at least one half of the villainies of which he pretended to have been

been guilty, and believed that his want of abilities and address had prevented their extending much beyond inclination and unsuccessful attempt. But this belief did not lessen our detestation of his principles, or the extreme disgust and weariness we began to feel in the constant repetitions of these accounts, which at once raised our contempt for his understanding, and hatred of his disposition. The obedience we paid to the directions of our father, in treating him with perfect civility, began to grow very difficult; for we could scarce restrain ourselves from showing him how entirely he was the object of our disdain; when we were suddenly plunged into the utmost consternation and distress, by his informing my sister, that he had her father's permission to address her as a lover, and at the same time adding, that as he found it was the particular wish of both families that an union

union should take place between them, and knowing that no man could escape his destiny, provided she felt no reluctance, he had resolved to oblige them.

This declaration was followed by an audience with my father, in which he informed her, that Lord Easure was by him resolved upon for her husband, and that he expected her to receive him as such, with all the cheerfulness and encouraging politeness which her happy prospects, and his merits demanded. It was in vain that poor Harriet fell at his feet, that she declared the most settled dislike to Lord Easure, and intreated him not to render her the most unhappy of human creatures, by uniting her to one who was so absolutely the object of her aversion. He treated her reluctance as the effect of weakness and folly, and her daring to acknowledge it as a breach of the duty and obedience she was by the unalterable laws of nature bound
to

to pay him. In short, with much contempt and rage he told her, that he did not send for her to consult her inclinations, but to notify his own; and dismissed her with a command immediately to prepare for her marriage, which he was determined should take place in a few days.

The evening after this dreadful order had been received, my sister, with the permission of her father, passed in her own apartment, a season which he thought proper to afford her for the recovery of her spirits, or as he expressed it, to reflect upon her own folly and bring her mind into a proper state of submission to the commands of her father, which he told her it was both her interest and duty to consider as the voice of heaven. I was not allowed to accompany her, but ordered, when I quitted the eating room, not to be absent more than an hour.

The

The habitual fear I felt of my father, was too strong to admit of my daring to disobey him in the smallest article ; I had therefore little time to soothe the mind of poor Harriet, who, indeed, appeared too much disturbed and afflicted to receive consolation from any thing I could offer. She was drowned in tears, and repeatedly declared that nothing should force her to violate her own sense of honour ; that she would rather die than become the wife of Lord Easure. I felt the greatest unwillingness to leave her in so much distress ; but the orders of my father were not to be disputed. Upon entering the drawing room I found him already there, together with the Earl and his son. The latter rising upon my entrance, and approaching me with a smile of self-satisfied importance, Well my dear Lady Frances, (said he,) will you pardon me for the preference I have given your sister ? Though, continued

tinued he, (lowering his voice,) you know matrimonial choice does not always imply preference. I was too much hurt and disgusted to answer him, nor during the night could I prevail upon myself to exert the smallest degree of cheerfulness. Upon retiring to my chamber I called at that of my sister. I found her more composed. She was sealing a letter, which appeared to be of considerable length. As soon as it was finished, she turned to me, and taking my hand, My dear Frances, (said she,) I observe with pleasure the affectionate share you take in my sufferings; but, do not, my love, let them too deeply affect you. I have resolved in what manner to act; if I can escape the misfortune that threatens me, I certainly will; if not, I must submit to it in the best manner I can. All the assistance I have to request from you, is, that the next time my brother or

Sir

Sir Philip Hastings visit us, which I have reason to believe will be to-morrow, that you will take an opportunity of giving this letter to one of them; to which, is a matter of perfect indifference. The reluctance I have acknowledged to the proposed marriage with Lord Easure, will probably induce my father to watch me more narrowly than common; but you will enjoy your usual degree of liberty, and may easily oblige me. I readily promised to do every thing she desired, and, indeed, so entirely did I love her, and so deeply was I interested in her happiness, that there were few things I would not have attempted to do her service.

The following day, my brother and Sir Philip arrived, according to my sister's expectation. They were in their usual spirits, not having heard any thing of what had passed. A few minutes after their entrance, my father requested
that

that my brother would accompany him into the library, he instantly obeyed, casting, as he quitted the room, an expressive look upon his friend, which was returned by one of mingled pleasure and apprehension; from which I conjectured that it was agreed upon between them, that the former should this morning make the intended proposal to his father. As Lord Belford and his son were with us in the room, I had no immediate opportunity of delivering my letter: at length I found one, while their eyes were employed in viewing a picture done by Opie, which had that morning been put up. He had scarce received it, when a servant entered, requesting that the Baronet would walk into the library. I observed his colour heighten, as he prepared to obey the summon, while that of poor Harriet intirely forsook her cheeks, and she with difficulty preserved herself from

VOL III. I fainting.

fainting. In less than a quarter of an hour my father entered: his features were discomposed, and his whole countenance expressive of anger, contempt, and severity. He strove to conceal his feelings, and address his guests with complacency; but, though he was by no means deficient in courtly dissimulation, it was with extreme difficulty that he preserved a tolerable appearance of ease; and the frequent looks of scorn and displeasure which he darted at my sister, but too plainly discovered, that, however politeness, and a regard for the company present, restrained him in words and actions, his mind was swayed by the most violent passions, and that she was the object of his extreme anger and contempt, if not of his aversion. His entrance was soon followed by that of my brother; but he entered alone, unaccompanied by his friend. Disappointment and vexation were depicted upon

upon his brow. He often gazed upon Harriet with tender concern, treated Lord Belford and his son with extreme coldness, spoke very little during the remainder of his visit, and took leave early in the evening.

He had no sooner left us, than my father, apologizing to his friends for a temporary absence, in a stern and commanding voice, ordered my sister and me to follow him to his dressing-room. Thither did we attend him, like two culprits, who were about to receive sentence from the severest judge, and for the worst of crimes. Upon entering, he seated himself, and ordering us to stand before him, informed my sister of the proposal her brother had made him, of a marriage between her and Sir Philip Hastings. I need not tell you (continued he) in what manner it was received. I cannot express my contempt for your folly and insolence in consent-

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ing to it, or his meanness in making it. I shall no more descend to mention an affair by which my family has been affronted, and which, had they the smallest remains of conscious dignity left, they would treat with resentment and disdain. I did not direct you to attend me here, in order to consult either your opinions or inclinations, both of which I perceive are in direct opposition to your honour and interest, but to inform you, that I have fixed upon the day after to-morrow for that of your marriage with Lord Easure, which I am determined shall then take place. Your brother's want of children obliges me to seek, in another line, for the continuation of my family: that of Villars is one of the most ancient and honourable in the kingdom, and Lord Easure will, at the death of his father, possess one of the largest estates in the island. I am therefore resolved to settle my whole fortune

upon your second son, and to my interest with my sovereign which I flatter myself is not inconsiderable) to insure my title to him, after the decease of your brother. Thus you perceive (continued he, with a voice somewhat more expressive of kindness) the glorious prospects before you: go and prepare yourself for the proper reception of them. Do not answer me! (continued he, seeing her about to speak). No power on earth shall alter my determination! It is to no purpose that you talk to me of love and hatred, living and dying, with all the rest of that common pretence by which the resolutions of so many weak fathers are shaken. Miserable or happy, dead or alive, you shall be the wife of Lord Easure!

He then turned to me, who stood trembling by the side of my half-fainting Harriet, and added, It was my

pleasure that you, Frances, should be present upon this occasion, that you might have the opportunity of profiting by the example of your sister, and of learning, from what hath now passed, that the commands of a father are not to be disputed. So saying, he waved his hand in token of our dismissal, and with some difficulty we quitted his presence, poor Harriet being scarce able to walk, and I in no very proper condition to support her.

The moment we reached my sister's dressing-room, we flung ourselves, as by mutual consent, upon a sofa, and for some time gave way to the most violent passion of tears. I first recovered the power of speaking, and, in the best manner I was able, endeavoured to comfort my sister; but she was quite inconsolable, declaring, that she was the most unfortunate of human beings; that the haste with which my father had resolved

resolved to complete her ruin, rendered it impossible for her to concert any measures for avoiding it; and that she had now no prospect, but that of falling a sacrifice to his unfeeling ambition. I could only weep, and beg her to be comforted; for, alas! I had no consolation to offer her, not being able to conceive any means by which she could hope to soften my father, or escape the effects of his tyranny. Our tears were still flowing, when we were summoned to attend supper. My sister did not strive to conceal her uneasiness. During the time of supper, her handkerchief was scarce ever from her eyes, and the plate which was placed before her was removed untouched. A few moments after the cloth was removed, and the attendants retired, my father and Lord Belford arose, as by agreement, and quitted the room, the former ordering my sister and me not to leave it till his

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return. They were no sooner gone, than Lord Easure, walking with a careless air up to Harriet, seated himself by her side, and attempting to take one of her hands, which she scornfully withdrew. Well, my dear lady, (said he,) you find what the old people have resolved upon. I presume Lord Clareville has informed you, that the day after to-morrow is fixed for the commencement of my happiness. I cannot suppose (replied my sister) that your Lordship can possibly expect to derive happiness from a marriage entirely devoid of affection, or that you can ever seriously think of passing your life with a woman, who, so far from being able to return the preference with which you honour her, will consider the necessity which compels her to unite herself to you, as the severest misfortune of her life. I trust (answered Lord Easure) that these sentiments will quickly

quickly change, and that I shall, in a short time, be favoured with as full a possession of my dear Lady Harriet's heart, as I shall ever presume to desire. Never! never! sir, (exclaimed my sister warmly,) never can my heart, which I acknowledge to be devoted to another, admit a second object of choice. If you can be ungenerous enough to resolve upon making me completely unhappy, by taking advantage of my father's cruelty and power, never must you expect to gain the smallest degree of my esteem or affection. I am sorry (replied his lordship) that the proposal happens to be disagreeable to you, because I really know no means by which it can be avoided. How! (replied Harriet,) is it not in your power to reject it? Surely, knowing my sentiments, you cannot want inducements to do so. Can you think, with patience, of marrying a woman who cannot love you—

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who loves another? I am really surprised (answered his lordship) to receive such sentiments from a lady of your rank in life,—sentiments which I should rather have expected to hear from the romantic daughter of a country parson. You must excuse me, my dear madam, if I cannot help smiling, to hear you talk with so much earnestness about love, esteem, and I know not how many fancied necessities, in a matrimonial engagement. Do you really think them so very indispensable? Indeed I do, (replied Harriet,) nor do I know any thing that can compensate for the loss of them. I am sorry (replied he) that we differ so much in our opinions. I am so far from thinking them necessary, that I rather esteem them troublesome and inconvenient, and the great destroyers of peace and politeness in the married state. Then, (answered Harriet,) since you are not induced to seek

seek my hand from motives of inclination, I trust you will grant that to my intreaties, which you refuse to the care of your own honour. Let me appeal to your generosity, to your politeness. By every thing you esteem estimable in man, let me conjure you to decline the purposed marriage ! Your so doing will eternally oblige me—will entitle you to my warmest, my most lasting gratitude. It really gives me extreme pain (answered his lordship) to be under the necessity of refusing any thing to so amiable a lady. Were I only to consult my own inclinations, I would most cheerfully obey you ; but in the present instance, I am sorry to add, that I am not my own master. Not your own master ! (exclaimed my sister.) What do you mean ? It has long been an agreement between Lord Belford and me, (answered Lord Easure,) that, provided he permitted me to follow my own plans in

the affairs of love, he should entirely govern those of matrimony. It has been his pleasure to point you out as the person he wishes me to marry; and my honour is engaged to fulfil my part of the treaty, as I can with truth aver, he has never in the smallest degree infringed his.

Harriet was about to have replied, when the entrance of the two Earls put an end to the conversation. In a few minutes after they were seated, my sister and I retired to her apartment. Indignation had, in some measure, supported her spirits, while Lord Easure was in her sight; but no sooner were we alone, than she relapsed into all her former sorrow. She was watering my bosom with her tears, and lamenting her unfortunate situation, in a manner that exceedingly affected me, when her maid entered, and delivered a letter to her, which she said had been brought
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by Lord Seward's valet, with particular orders to have it delivered into her own hands. Harriet snatched it from her with every appearance of impatience, and while she perused it, I with pleasure observed her countenance brighten, and joy sparkle in her eyes. As soon as she had finished reading, she folded up the letter, and put it into her pocket, with a look of perfect satisfaction. Then turning to me, with a smile, "Our dear good brother (said she) promises to intercede for me; he bids me hope every thing from his friendship. Good night, my love! (continued she, kissing me,) let me no longer detain you from rest. I shall now want no comforter."

I was delighted to see her so suddenly restored to peace and apparent cheerfulness; though, after what was passed, I could not but wonder at the confidence she seemed to place in an intercession

cession which had already proved vain. I was rejoiced to see her more at ease, but feared soon to behold her again plunged in anguish and despair.

The next morning, however, she still appeared to retain hopes; for when I met her in the breakfast-room, she was composed, and almost cheerful, though she still treated Lord Easre with the most distant coldness, and spoke very little; but he made ample amends for her silence, his spirits being uncommonly high, which occasioned him to talk almost incessantly. He addressed much of his conversation to Harriet, which she seldom honoured by the smallest apparent attention. My father observing this, told him, he hoped he would have a more obliging wife than he had a mistress. To which his Lordship answered, that he did not in the least doubt it, adding, I am really quite charmed with my dear
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Lady Harriet's behaviour; she is the first coy reluctant beauty I ever had the good fortune to meet with, and the unexpected novelty gives zest to matrimony itself.

During the whole day, my sister continued in the same state of composure. Instead of seeking to be alone, or conversing with me, she appeared studiously to avoid both; and when my father condescended two or three times to consult her about the arrangements of the next day, she only answered, that she wished every thing to be ordered just as he thought proper. When we retired for the evening, she kissed me with much affection, telling me, that her future prospects wore, in her opinion, a very different aspect from that with which they had appeared to her two days before. I have now, (continued she) little doubt of passing my days at least comfortably; but, as
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it will require all my strength of mind to go through the task I have promised to perform, I must beg of my dear Frances to leave me. Your presence, my love, rather softens and confuses my ideas, than contributes to their strength and regulation; oblige me, therefore, by omitting to call upon me in the morning, nor permit any one to disturb me till every thing is in readiness for the ceremony. I have need (added she, sighing,) of all my resolution, to support me in a situation so trying as that before me. I took leave of her, with expressing my sincerest wishes for her happiness, and an assurance that I would implicitly observe the directions she had given me.

I arose the following morning, with a heart depressed by sorrow and apprehension. Notwithstanding my sister's apparent calmness, I had no doubt but her reluctance and dislike to the
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thoughts of becoming the wife of Lord Easure were as strong, though not so violent, as ever. She had never accustomed herself to talk to me upon the subject of her attachment to Sir Philip Hastings, fearing, as I always believed, to draw upon me the displeasure of her father, or fill my imagination with improper ideas; but I was certain, that it was of the firmest kind, and the great difference between the men considered, it was not probable that she could so suddenly bring herself to give up the one, and accept the other, without doing the utmost violence both to her principles and feelings.

It had been settled, between my father and Lord Belford, that the marriage ceremony should be performed at ten in the morning. An elegant breakfast was to succeed; after which, we were all to set out for Belford Abbey, where every possible festivity, which
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the occasion could require or admit, was to be celebrated in its honour.

About a quarter of an hour before the appointed time, I entered my father's library, which was appointed for the place of rendezvous upon this, to me, most solemn occasion. The two Earls were already there, as was the Bishop of ———, our near relation, who was appointed to perform the ceremony. But the person who most powerfully attracted my attention, was a young gentleman of the most noble and engaging appearance I had ever beheld. You know the present Earl of Belford, my dear Miss Maitland, (continued Lady Frances,) and will not therefore be surprised to hear that he was, two and twenty years since, accounted one of the handsomest and most accomplished young men in the kingdom. To me, indeed, he appeared such; and when, upon his father's presenting him
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to me, he respectfully kissed my hand, requesting that he might, upon the strength of the alliance which was about to take place between our families, have the honour to be admitted into the number of my friends, methought he spoke with more grace, elegance, and animation, than any other person I had ever seen or heard.

We had conversed but a few minutes, when the entrance of the intended bridegroom interrupted us, and recalled my thoughts to the disagreeable scene I was apprehensive of shortly beholding. I could not help feeling a strong regret; that he did not in something resemble Mr. Villars, who my young and inexperienced heart had already told me was every thing that could be esteemed amiable. His appearance was indeed, upon this occasion, most unlike to that of his brother. His dress was affectedly negligent, almost
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to dirtyness, and he entered the room with a kind of half-yawn, which he intended should be expressive of indolence and indifference. So, (exclaimed he, shrugging up his shoulders,) I see you are all assembled. And my good Lord of ——— too! nay, then there is no hope left! When the square cap appears, condemnation must follow! I hope, my Lord, (answered the Bishop) I shall be the means of insuring your felicity, not the pronouncer of your condemnation. The chances (replied his Lordship) are, I fear, rather against matrimonial adventurers. But the die is cast; the family jewels are new set, and the Lady must not be disappointed. Then, turning to his brother, he added, in a half-whisper, Faith, Frederick, I almost wish thou wouldst become my proxy; I do not quite relish this serious fooling. Suppose (replied Mr. Villars) I should, in consequence
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of my compliance with your whimsical request, happen to become your proxy in your lady's affections? Oh! as for that, (answered his Lordship,) I must run the common hazard. I do not mean to make a jealous husband.

He was here interrupted by my father, who asked me, if my sister was prepared, and ready to appear. To which I answered, that I knew nothing that was likely to prevent her. Upon which a servant was directed to request the favor of her company. He returned to inform us, that her woman said, she would be ready in a quarter of an hour. My father seemed a little displeased at this want of punctuality; and Lord Easure repeating the significant shrug of his shoulders, exclaimed, in a low voice, A short reprieve is better than none. Though (continued he, affectedly addressing me) I am really sorry that your sister gives herself
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so much unnecessary trouble about dress. In my opinion, she looks vastly well in her blue habit. You, at least, have nothing to accuse yourself of upon that account, (said Mr. Villars.) One would judge, by the extreme negligence of your appearance, that you had been married these seven years. Why, you know (replied his lordship) it *must* come to this; and really, at this unseasonable hour, one is more inclined to repose, than to study the *brilliance* in appearance.

More chat of the same kind passed among us, till my father, growing quite impatient, sent another message up to my sister, informing her that we were all waiting, and requesting that she would come down immediately. In a few moments (the door of the library being left open) we heard the rustling of silk, and a female step descending slowly down the great stairs. Here she
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is! (exclaimed Lord Eafire in an affected fright.) There's no escaping now! Prithoe, Frederic, be merciful! Don't laugh at me! Remember, thou must wear shackles some time or other! Destiny will be fulfilled!—At this instant, with a countenance half confident, half terrified, entered my sister's woman, and informed us, that her lady had the evening before left the house, and was upon her road to London, in company with Sir Philip Haffings. Never was rage, surprise, and mortified vanity, more conspicuously and strongly expressed, than upon the countenances of the company present, when this unexpected account was delivered. My father's passion exceeded all bounds. He stamped, bit his lips, and for a few moments wholly resigned himself to the influence of his natural violence of temper. Then suddenly pausing, and assuming a solemn resoluteness of look and

and accent, he swore never more to admit my sister into his presence, or consider her as in any degree entitled to his care or protection. The Bishop of —— would have remonstrated against, what he termed, so rash and improper a resolution, but my father absolutely refused to hear him, saying, he was determined to act for himself, and willing to risk any consequences which his conduct in the present instance might draw upon him. His lordship, finding all his endeavours to act in the capacity of a peace-maker vain and unregarded, took his leave, not chusing longer to witness a scene of so much violence and confusion.

My father ordered Harriet's woman to leave the house immediately; to which she answered, that she was prepared to do so, having received her lady's commands to follow her to town. Lord Belford asked, if it would not be
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proper to follow the run-aways? saying, he thought they might yet possibly be overtaken, before a marriage could be effected. But my father absolutely refused to think of it. No, (said he, with a look and voice perfectly cool and determined,) let her folly be its own punishment. She no longer belongs to me, or my family. Were she my only child, my only relation, I would never behold her more.

During the first day after my sister's elopement, Lord Easure appeared in a state of extreme mortification. He had lost great part of his affected humour, and had little or nothing to answer in return to his brother's raillery, of which the latter was by no means sparing, and which I could not help enjoying exceedingly. I was, indeed, sincerely rejoiced that my sister had escaped the misery which must have been her portion, had she become the wife of so

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weak, worthless, and ill-disposed a being as Lord Easure. I could not doubt but time would soften my father's severity towards her. She had chosen a man whose character was uncommonly excellent, and whose situation in life could not discredit a family of the first importance. I had therefore the strongest hope of soon beholding her return, and resume at least her usual place in his affection; but in this I was mistaken, and inexpressibly disappointed. My father would neither see his daughter nor her husband: he returned their letters unopened, and refused to suffer either my brother, his lady, or myself, to speak a word in her vindication; telling me, that, in his treatment of her, I had a lesson of conduct, which he hoped I would apply to my own use, since I might assure myself, that, in a similar situation, that which I should experience

rience would be in every respect the same.

Lord Belford and his sons continued at Clareville rather more than a week after the departure of my sister, during which time Mr. Villars every day appeared more agreeable in my eyes. His person was uncommonly fine, his manners equally pleasing, his sentiments, opinions and dispositions, apparently all that honour, virtue and delicacy, could inspire or demand. Seventeen is not an age at which to distinguish the specious from the intrinsic. I was charmed with every thing that was done or said by Mr. Villars; and the striking contrast between him and his brother, which every hour presented itself before me, strengthened the approbation which his fine qualities appeared to demand. When he quitted Clareville, I thought every thing that had power to please departed with him, and I trembled to

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look forward to the melancholy life I was likely to lead with my father, whose increasing ill health, and the disappointment he had lately met with, had greatly added to the natural gloom and severity of his temper. I was not suffered to correspond with my sister; very seldom permitted to visit my brother, who, on account of the part he had taken in her marriage, and the intimacy which still continued to subsist between him and Sir Philip, was no longer a welcome guest at Clareville, and therefore rarely approached it. The company of my sister had hitherto rendered my situation supportable. We had always sincerely loved each other; and the pleasure of complaining to those we love, and by whom our affection is returned, is so great, as almost to compensate for the occasion which gives rise to it. But I had now no friend, no companion, no relief from constraint

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and sorrow. I thought, indeed, that no condition could well be more mortifying; yet I dreaded the very idea of change, which I thought could only be effected by such a marriage as that from which my sister had escaped, and which I saw no means of avoiding, but by forfeiting every advantage of my birth. The only comfort I possessed, lay in the hope that this misfortune was at a distance. But in this hope I was deceived: the dreaded stroke was even then suspended over my head.

About twelve months after my sister's marriage, as I was sitting in my father's dressing-room, after conversing for some time with rather more than usual cheerfulness, Frances, (said he,) your sister's disobedience and folly have wholly banished her from my affections: she is no longer my daughter. Your brother's want of children, and his retired manner of living, renders any addition to

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his

his fortune unnecessary: upon you, therefore, I have fixed my hopes. The chearful manner in which you have attended me, ever since my retirement from public life, affords me the most agreeable assurance of your perfect and ready submission to my directions and pleasure, in an affair of the utmost importance to your interest and honour, and upon which I have in a particular manner set my heart. Should your conduct prove you unworthy of my regard, I am determined to make a distant relation my heir, and to use that interest in his favour which I hope to exert in the aggrandizement of your descendants. But your apparent disposition, and the proper sense of duty which you have ever appeared to entertain, leads me to expect better things. You are not ignorant of the ancient amity and friendship which hath for many ages subsisted between my house and that of Belford.

Belford. You know, likewise, the ill usage which the present lord (who is my personal friend) has lately received in my family. Yet, so far from resenting it, as I might have expected him to do, he is still desirous of allying himself to it, in order to which he hath purposed a marriage between you and his eldest son. I have consented; and it now remains that your chearful and unconstrained obedience proves you worthy of the attention I pay to your happiness, and the great degree of it which awaits you.

It was with difficulty that I continued to support myself in my chair. I trembled; I could scarce breathe. My father, observing my situation, arose and quitted the room, leaving me at leisure to contemplate my own wretchedness. I was indeed wretched! My aversion, my contempt for Lord Easure, was unspeakable. He had been the cause of

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all my beloved sister's misfortunes. His ungenerous behaviour to her, his person, his manners, his disposition, and avowed principle, were every thing that could raise my abhorrence, my hatred. Yet I saw no means of escaping the miserable fate which threatened me; death only appeared capable of affording me a shelter from the tyranny of my father. Oh! how ardently did I wish for the power of seeking that peace in the grave, which the world appeared to deny me. Nothing but the fear of incurring unpardonable guilt, of drawing down upon my devoted head the anger of that Being, whose approbation, which constantly attends those who seek to obtain it, could alone render existence supportable, restrained my hand, which more than once was upon the very point of executing the last act of desperation. I cannot even now reflect upon the struggle I endured, without in part feeling the pangs of horror and despair which

which then tore my wretched bosom. At length the strong sense of religion, which from my earliest years had happily been impressed upon my mind, in some degree calmed its agitations. Despair dictated a conduct similar to that, which indifference would have pointed out. I knew how vain it was to expect or supplicate mercy from my father; Lord Belford and his son were equally unfeeling. I therefore determined to submit, without further struggle, to give my hand to Lord Easure, and patiently wait till death, (whose wished for approach my sorrow could not but accelerate,) should put an end to my sufferings.

In this resolution I waited, with a gloomy kind of resignation, for the day, upon which I was to sacrifice all my future hopes of comfort. It was some satisfaction to me to hear, that I was not to be tormented by the sight of

my intended husband, till the day preceding that, upon which the ceremony was to take place. But, alas! the day of his arrival came but too soon. I awakened with a degree of horror upon my mind, which is more easily conceived than expressed, and several hours elapsed, before I could regain a state of tolerable composure. At length the object of my strongest aversion appeared, but the effects which the sight of him would probably have produced upon me were in a great measure lost, by his being accompanied by his brother.

Mr. Villars looked more amiable, more pleasing than ever. He addressed me with the affection of a brother, mingled with something still more interesting; expressed great concern at seeing my countenance so much altered since he had last beheld me; and said every thing that could tend to convince me, that my happiness was dear to him.

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His looks, too, expressed more than his words ; they told me, that his heart felt more than they dared to utter ; that nothing but hope was wanting to render him my lover. As for Lord Easure, his behaviour was an exact counterpart of that which I have already described when my sister was the object of his persecution. I could not behold him without horror, or think of my approaching marriage without inexpressible pain.

Notwithstanding these conflicts which my heart endured, I had resolution enough to preserve a countenance tolerably steady. I was supported by despair, which told me, that complaint was vain, and I had ever considered useless repining as the offspring of weakness. But, when the papers, settlements, &c. were produced, and Lord Easure having signed his name, presented the pen to me, that I might follow his example, a trembling seized my whole frame, the

light danced before my eyes, I had just strength to write my name, when the instrument fell from my hand, and I fainted away.

When I recovered, I found myself in the arms of Mr. Villars, who in a manner expressive of the tenderest concern, inquired after my health. Since the departure of my sister I had not heard the voice of tenderness. Even her's was less soft than that of Mr. Villars. It sunk into my heart; I felt that I was more wretched than ever. A couple of hours which I passed alone in my dressing room were hardly sufficient to enable me to return to the drawing room with tolerable composure, yet an irresistible something drew me thither. Upon entering I found Mr. Villars alone, seated upon a sofa, in the most melancholy attitude. The moment he beheld me, joy sparkled in his fine eyes, but it was soon succeeded by dejection.

dejection. He handed me to the sofa, and silently seating himself by my side, a deep sigh escaped him, which appeared to issue from the closest recesses of his soul. My eyes involuntarily met his; he seemed confused, caught my hand, impressed an ardent kiss upon it, then starting up, walked to a distant window without uttering a single word.

I was surprised, almost frightened, and doubtful whether I ought not to leave the room, when he suddenly returned, and resuming his seat, Forgive, (he exclaimed,) most amiable of women, forgive the involuntarily transports of a heart, but too sensible of your perfections. Alas! Lady Frances, (continued he, pressing my trembling hand) you are not happy. My brother does not owe his good fortune to the preference with which your heart regards him, but to a too rigid sense of duty, which will, I fear, hurry you to an act, the consequence

quence of which must render the remainder of your life unhappy. Forgive, (continued he,) the abrupt manner in which I have ventured to introduce a subject of so much importance : alas ! this may be the last moment for deliberation. To-morrow you are lost for ever.

I will not, my dear Miss Maitland, (continued Lady Frances,) attempt to give you the particulars of a conversation which lasted more than two hours. Suffice it to say, that Mr. Villars was a perfect master of the arts of persuasion ; that he so effectually employed those arts, as to induce me to promise to follow my sister's example, and that very evening meet him at the bottom of the Park, where he proposed to have a chaise and four in readiness, to convey me to Scotland. I had represented to him the certain consequences of such a step ; namely, the entire loss of my father's favour,

favour, and the fortune I had a right to hope for from him; but he treated these considerations as of no importance, when compared with the loss or acquisition of happiness; saying he had little doubt but his father, who possessed great influence over the mind of Lord Clareville, would easily prevail upon him to forgive an action in its own nature so justifiable; especially as he had no other child, who might by such an act of lenity, be encouraged to dispute his future commands. But should he obstinately adhere to the resolution he professed to have taken, his own fortune, which, (he said,) was not inconsiderable, would enable him to support the woman he loved in easy independence, though not in the affluence and dignity in which he could wish to place her.

The wretchedness of my situation, the unhopèd for happiness of escaping from a life of mortification and pain,
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and the delightful prospect of passing it with one so amiable, so generous, one by whom I was tenderly beloved, and whose fine qualities and goodness of heart, would render it my pride and glory to acknowledge as my deliverer, my guardian, my all, were circumstances, which too powerfully operated upon my imagination, to admit of my perceiving either danger or difficulty in the plan we had fixed upon. Every thing was agreed, the hour appointed, and all arranged to our intire satisfaction, when my father and Lord Easre returned from a walk they had taken in the Park. The former complained of extreme fatigue and pain in his head. He ate nothing at dinner, and in the course of the evening felt evident symptoms of a violent fever. The physician who usually attended him was immediately sent for, who ordered him to be put to bed, and appeared much alarmed at the situation
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in which he found him. In a few hours he became delirious, and the fever increased so rapidly, that the doctor requested that more assistance might be called in, as the symptoms were of the very worst kind.

This circumstance intirely put an end to my intended journey. Mr. Villars, indeed, mentioned my taking advantage of the confusion of the family, and my father's weak state, which rendered him incapable of pursuing us, and getting safe to Scotland while it was in my power; but I absolutely refused to comply with his request, not without expressing some indignation at his supposing me unfeeling enough to forsake a parent in such a situation. For which he apologized, by pleading the strength of his passion, and his fears that my health might be injured by a close attendance upon my father, such as he knew my high sense of duty would lead me

me to pay, while I continued at Clareville. How easily are we induced to pardon those we love, whose actions always appear to us in the fairest light. I ought to have suspected the man who could for a moment have wished me to violate every sense of propriety, delicacy, and duty, in order to gratify his own passion. But, alas! I had not accustomed myself so exactly to weigh things in the scale of judgment and right. If I did not suffer my affection for Mr. Villars intirely to blind my reason, it at least obscured it too much to admit of my observing the tendency of his conduct upon this occasion, or perceiving that it was dictated by a selfish ungenerous heart.

During the whole night I remained in my father's apartment; his fever still continued to increase, and when two more of the faculty arrived early the next morning they pronounced him in
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the utmost danger. I dispatched a servant immediately to my brother, requesting his presence; and as soon as he had seen his father, and heard the opinions of the consultation, I requested that he would inform Lord Easure, that during my father's continuance in his present state of insensibility, I thought myself at liberty to act according to my own choice and determination; and that I was resolved to listen to no proposals of the nature of that with which he had honoured me, at least till his perfect recovery should again subject me to his influence. This message, which was delivered by my brother, in a manner which left my tormentor no hope of reversing the sentence it conveyed, had all the effect I could desire from it; his Lordship that very afternoon quitted Clareville, nor did I ever afterwards behold him.

For

For more than a fortnight, my father continued in a state of the utmost danger: about that time his disorder took a favourable turn, but his recovery was slow, and his constitution so much weakened and impaired by its violence, that his physicians thought a change of climate necessary to the restoration of his health. We accordingly removed to the south of France, it having been settled between my father, (to whom my attendance was necessary,) and Lord Belford, that my marriage with Lord Easure should take place immediately upon our return to England.

For some months after our arrival upon the continent, my father continued in a state of great debility, both of mind and body. He appeared to be grown almost wholly indifferent to every thing which he had once esteemed of consequence, but about the trifles by which he was surrounded, he was capricious

precious and particular beyond a possibility of satisfaction or tolerable comfort. Though every one who approached him, made his ease and humour their principal study, he was constantly complaining of the neglect and ill usage which he suffered, and if I was absent from his chamber for more than ten minutes at a time, he would reproach me in the severest terms with being weary of the performance of my duty; often telling me, that he knew I should be glad of his death, but adding, that he would take care to give me no cause to rejoice, for that he was resolved to bequeath me only a bare subsistence.

About six months after we were settled at Montpelier, Mr. Villars, with whom I had regularly corresponded, made his appearance there, pretending to my father, that a sudden and violent disorder, with which he had been seized, was

was the occasion of his journey, and that he was ordered by his physicians to pass some months upon the continent. As the Earl had never entertained the most distant suspicion of the attachment which subsisted between our visitor and myself, he received him in the most gracious manner, and gave him a general invitation to pass all his leisure hours at our house; of this permission Mr. Villars availed himself in its fullest extent, for he almost lived there. He would generally pay his respects to my father every morning, and chat with him for about half an hour in his chamber, which he now never quitted, except when he went out in a carriage for the benefit of the air. After this visit, Mr. Villars usually retired to the drawing-room, where he often passed the whole day, reading, drawing, playing on the harpsichord, or amusing himself with his own reflections. Com-
pany

pany he had no chance of meeting, no visitant, except himself, ever being admitted within our doors.

Whenever my father slept, or went an airing, each of which he regularly did twice every day, I constantly passed the time of his absence in the drawing-room, where the lively engaging conversation of Mr. Villars compensated for the many melancholy hours I passed with him. The contrast indeed between them was too great; all my pleasure depended upon him; to him only could I complain of my discomforts, and only from him did I expect or receive consolation: these were dangerous circumstances to a temper warm, open, and susceptible as mine. Yet I always steadily refused to hearken to any proposal of leaving my father, whose situation demanded all my care, and upon whom I was resolved to attend to the last moments of life, whatever might be the present

present treatment, or future reward I had to expect from him. But by degrees, Mr. Villars gained such an ascendancy over my mind, so much did my love for him increase, that he persuaded me to consent to a private marriage, which was performed by my father's chaplain, in the presence of a particular friend whom my lover introduced to me, and with whose name and family I was well acquainted, and two of my own favourite domestics.

Our family were all so much attached to my person, by good offices, which I had constant opportunities of doing them, that I had little reason to fear that a discovery would have been made to my father, had my marriage been known to every individual belonging to it, but such precautions had been taken as wholly to elude their suspicions; and some months elapsed, during which, it continued a profound secret to every one,

one, except those who were present at its performance.

My father had, during the first year of his residence at Montpelier, been flattered with the hope of a perfect restoration to health, but soon after the event I have just related had taken place, many of his former bad symptoms returned again, though with less violence, and his recovery was pronounced doubtful. The offence which I could not but be conscious of having committed against parental authority, redoubled my attentions to him, for I now felt it a duty to submit to every difficulty, which his increasing illness and caprice brought upon me, without even the slightest murmur. My husband's fondness and gratitude for what he called my condescension, appeared every hour to become warmer and more lively; I had no doubt of our marriage remaining a secret during my father's

VOL. III.

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life,

life, after which, as I should be in every respect my own mistress, I should no longer have any reason to wish it to continue such, but might look forward to years of unclouded happiness.

One morning that Mr. Villars was gone with a party of his friends upon a pleasureable excursion, which he had exceedingly lamented that I could not partake with him, and my father was taking one of his usual airings, upon which occasions, he chose the attendance of his nurse rather than mine, I was sitting in my dressing-room revolving in my mind past events, and amusing myself with pleasing views of the future; when a post-chaise stopped at the door, in which was a lady who requested to speak with me upon very particular business. It never was my custom to stand aloof, and shut myself up from my fellow creatures, more than the haughty and severe temper of my

4

father

father rendered unavoidable; it had ever been my desire to mix with the worthy and amiable, without exactly considering whether their rank or fortune entitled them to so vast an honour; for I never could esteem myself as in truth and nature their superior.

The stranger who now solicited, found an easy admission; she was a beautiful young woman, elegant in her appearance; and if I could judge from the short conversation I held with her, pleasing in her manners. After some apologies for her intrusion, and the seeming liberty she was about to take, she asked me if Mr. Villars did not at that time privately pay his addresses to me? I was much surprized at the question, and desired to know for what reason it was proposed to me; upon which, with many tears, and every possible appearance of distress, she told me that she had the misfortune to be his wife, and

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con-

convinced me of the truth of what she asserted by the sight of several letters, the hand-writing of which I but too well knew to be his, in which he not only stiled her his dear wife, and subscribed himself her happy and affectionate husband, but mentioned various circumstances relative to their marriage, expressed the most grateful sense of the confidence she had reposed in him, and promised to embrace the very earliest opportunity of informing his father of their union, and declaring it to the whole world.

Judge, my dear Juliana, judge my situation! Think what I must feel, when I tell you that I was at this time several months advanced in my pregnancy, and that I loved with inexpressible fondness the cruel author of my misery. I had just strength and resolution enough left in this dreadful moment to thank Mrs. Villars for her information,

formation, to assure her that she had nothing to fear from me as a rival in the affections of her husband, who I was resolved never more to behold, and to request that she would leave me. She had scarce quitted the room, when I fainted away; the moment that I was sufficiently recovered, I wrote a few lines to my deceiver, in which I informed him of the discovery I had made, and without descending to load him with a single reproach, absolutely forbid him ever more to appear in my sight. Upon this trying occasion my spirits and resolution seemed to be supported by a supernatural assistance; sorrow was overcome by indignation; the cruel injuries I had received, appeared at once to have broken the charm by which my affections were united to him from whom I had suffered them. He no longer appeared amiable; the close disguise which had so fatally deceived

L 3

me,

me, was removed, and the selfish unprincipled hypocrite stood confessed, converting all that had been dear to my soul, into an object of its utmost scorn and aversion.

Mr. Villars wrote me several letters, but I returned them all unopened, being convinced that no apology he had the power of making could do away any part of his crime, or justify my forgiveness of it. Upon the back of one which he sent to me, I wrote these words: Trouble me no more; you are the husband of another; my resolution is founded upon principle, and not to be shaken: after this he ceased to molest me, and I was left to the quiet enjoyment of my wretchedness.

Notwithstanding the resolution with which I had supported so severe a trial of my constancy, my anxiety and regret brought a nervous fever, which for some time hung upon me; my situation

tion was every moment occurring to my mind, and afflicted it with pangs which nothing but those of guilt could exceed. I was under the necessity of revealing this melancholy circumstance to the two female domestics who were present at my marriage, (one of whom is now my woman, and the other my house-keeper at Clareville,) and concert with them the means of concealing it from my father. My illness had in a great measure obliged him to dispense with my attendance in his chamber, where I was often unable to appear for several successive days, by which means he was become accustomed to receive his medicines, &c. from his nurse, which it had before been my constant office to administer. I was a little beginning to recover from the disorder which had affected my health, when at the end of the seventh month of my pregnancy I was delivered of a daughter. The in-

L 4

fant

fant was privately carried out of the house, and every thing so managed by my women that no other persons in the family suspected the cause of my illness; and having so frequently been accustomed to keep my room for two or three days together, it passed wholly unobserved by my father, who believed I had the best advice, and was indeed too much disordered in his own health to pay any great attention to that of another.

As soon as I could leave my room, all my attention was taken up with the care of my poor baby; for whom, though I had but once folded it to my bosom, but once impressed a maternal kiss upon its dear lips, I had instinctively conceived the most passionate fondness. I had directed that a wet nurse should be procured for it, and every thing done that could make it amends for the involuntary neglect of its unfortunate mother.

During

During a month I visited it every day ; Burne always went with me, for in order effectually to prevent a possibility of the affair being made known to my father, she had told the nurse that the child was her own, but that I had promised to be its godmother, and bring it up for her at my own expence.

During these visits I was forced, while the nurse was present, to restrain my feelings, and behave as one to whom the infant was almost indifferent ; but the moment she quitted the room, I would give a loose to the tenderness with which my heart overflowed ; I would press it to my bosom, kiss its soft cheek, and weep over it by turns. I had, however, the pleasure of seeing it thrive as fast as I could hope ; it was my resolution, as soon as I got to England, to send a nurse properly attended to fetch it over, to have it educated with the utmost care, and when it grew

L 5

up,

up, to acknowledge it for my own, and afford it every advantage which I had the power to communicate, or nature had given it a right to claim. In pursuance of my pretended promise to Burne, I had it christened after the name of my mother, whose memory was extremely dear to me, upon which occasion I made a pretty large present to the nurse, in order to increase her care of my little darling, with which indeed I had every cause to be satisfied, as it grew very fast, and appeared in the most perfect health.

In this promising state it was, when a sudden inclination of my father's determined him to set out immediately upon his return to England, and I was forced to tear myself from the little creature who was become dearer to me than life. This was not effected without excessive pain, many passionate tears, and tender caresses; and when I im-
pressed

pressed the last kiss upon its sweet lips, a cold shivering seized my heart, which instantly communicated itself to my whole frame, and which, were I at all inclined to superstition, I should consider as a signal of the affecting, irretrievable loss I was quickly to sustain.

We were scarcely landed at Dover, when we received the most unexpected and unwelcome account of the death of my brother, which was a shock I was hardly able to support, and which so greatly surprized and affected my father, that he lived but a few days after he had received it. During this short time he appeared deeply sensible of the vanity of human greatness and ambition; he repeatedly begged my forgiveness for the pain he had occasioned me, and the unkind manner in which he had so often treated me; but he could by no arguments be prevailed upon to alter the resolution he had made with regard
to

to my sister; so that having made a new regulation of his affairs, I found myself at his decease left sole heiress to his great fortune, and much richer than I had any right to be.

The first care that occupied my thoughts, after the interment of my father, was that of my poor baby; my heart beat with impatience to behold it again; I did not lose an hour in dispatching Burne over with considerable offers to the nurse, if she would consent to return with her; and if she appeared unwilling to accept them, it was my orders that she should inform her to whom the child belonged, and promise her whatever she asked, as an inducement to her removal; for I feared that a change might affect the health of my little darling, which I valued beyond every thing else in the world.

I cannot describe my impatience or anxiety during the absence of Burne.

At

At the time when I supposed she was upon her passage back, every breath of wind alarmed me, and my fancy presented to me every possible accident that could befall a traveller either by land or water. I counted the days and hours till the time of her expected return, when I hoped to receive my little treasure once more to my fond heart. I resolved to inform my friends and relatives of the imprudence I had been guilty of, to have the dear infant nursed in my own house, and to make her the solace and care of my remaining life. Judge then, my dear Miss Maitland, what was my disappointment, my anguish, when my woman returned with the melancholy information, that the sweet little angel had died in convulsions three days after I left it.

I will not pain your feeling heart by attempting to describe what mine endured; it had fixed its whole hopes of
comfort

comfort upon one dear object, and its disappointment was inexpressibly afflictive.

Soon after the loss of my infant, I saw in the public prints an account of the death of Lord Belford, which was in a few weeks succeeded by that of his eldest son; and shortly after, I had the misfortune to be deprived of my beloved sister, whose friendship had been my greatest consolation under all my distresses; though I never made her acquainted with the principal ones I had endured, fearing to involve her husband in a quarrel, which would, I knew, be the certain consequence of his being informed of the ill usage I had received. As for the present Lord Belford, I have never beheld him since I discovered the villainy of his conduct towards me. Soon after the death of my father, he employed a common friend to request that I would admit him once more into my

my presence, assuring me, that he had something to say, which would, he trusted, mollify, if not entirely remove, my resentment, for the crime I believed him to have committed against me: but I absolutely refused to see him; declaring, that I had not the smallest remaining regard for him; and begging, as the last and only request I ever should make him, that he never would, upon any occasion, appear in my sight; a request he has carefully attended to; nor do I believe, that the affair is at all suspected by the world, or known to any, except those who were present at my marriage, and yourself, the only person to whom it ever was by me related.

These, my dear Miss Maitland, are the circumstances which have robbed my youth of its cheerfulness, and still continue to cloud my day of life with a deep and painful regret of which my mind is unable to divest itself.

The

The tears of our heroine flowed apace: she kissed the hand of her revered friend; and, in a voice broken by her emotions, exclaimed, Oh! that I were that daughter! that it were in my power to soothe your regrets! You do soothe them, my dear, lovely girl, (answered Lady Frances;) you are my daughter; the adopted child of my affections. I know not, had my own been spared to my hopes, whether I could have loved her more than I do you. Juliana could with truth have replied, that she was far dearer to her than she to whom nature had obliged her to pay the external respect due to a parent; but a sense of duty never would permit her to mention her disapprobation of a mother's character or conduct. She spoke of her as seldom as possible, and never but upon trifling and general occasions, which admitted neither of praise or blame; but she was delighted to

to hear Lady Frances speak of the late Sir George Maitland and his brother, with both of whom she was well acquainted, as two of the worthiest of men, and could have listened to several little anecdotes she related of them for ever; her mind dwelling with an inexpressible satisfaction upon the thought, that she had one parent for whom she had no cause to blush; but from whom, on the contrary, she derived honour, and had a right to that best inheritance, understanding and virtue.

It is then that time appears to move most swiftly, when its even tenor leaves no trace upon the memory, by which its parts may be separated, and an account kept of its progress. Thus Lady Frances and our heroine, though they were entirely without what is called amusement, found the fortnight they spent together pass insensibly away, before half of it seemed to be elapsed; and

and when a card arrived from Mordant-Place, to inform Miss Maitland that her mother and the family were returned, she received it as the disturber of a sweet repose, which she could almost have wished should never have been broken; at least she would have wished to have been awakened from the dream of friendship and rationality by something more interesting, than a return to the common forms, common objects, and common ideas of ordinary life.

END OF VOL. III.

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The Publisher of this work, the former part of which has been received so very favourably, as to be universally read and approved, flatters himself the Public will excuse the delay of this second part, which has arose from some unforeseen circumstances.—He however presumes to hope the UNCOMMON MERIT of this book will make amends for the delay.

HENRY AND ISABELLA;

OR, A

T R A I T E

THROUGH

L I F E.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
CAROLINE, OR THE DIVERSITIES OF FORTUNE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

V O L. IV.



L O N D O N :

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1788.

HENRY AND ISABELLA.

CHAPTER XXVI.

A DISCOVERY.

LADY Frances did not accompany Juliana to Mordant-Place, fearing that Lord Belford might still be a guest in that family. When our heroine took leave of her, it was with the expectation of seeing her no more, till she should have the happiness of receiving her at her own habitation, as she meant to set out the next morning for Clareville; where she had appointed Sir Charles Hastings and a few other friends to meet, and spend some weeks with her, hoping, as she informed her fair friend,

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to

to divert the mind of her nephew from an object upon which, she perceived with pain, it was too apt to dwell.

Juliana was received by her friends at Mordant-Place, much in the manner she had reason to expect, except that Lady Maitland appeared to have left her ill humour behind her at Stanton, and to have resumed all the obliging affectation of tenderness, with which she used to treat her; but if this was more agreeable to her than the reverse, the behaviour of Lord Belford was more particular, and far more presuming than it had ever before been; and would have rendered her situation extremely disagreeable, had it not been for the comfortable consideration, that it would continue but a few days. The very sight of the Earl was now become an object of aversion to her; the injured Lady Frances was blended with every thought, in which he had a
share,

share, and changed his fine person, wit, and politeness, into something more disgusting than deformity, dullness, or vulgarism. She found that Miss Mordant was not yet returned, having taken a little round with Miss Windfor, her brother, and Sir George Maitland, who, they informed her, met them at the races, and was coming to spend some time with them at Mordant-Place.

The following day they arrived. The two ladies in the highest spirits, and Sir George, rather more animated than was usual to him. The pleasures of the past fortnight were dwelt upon by Miss Mordant and her friend, with particular delight; Miss Windfor several times repeating that they were so charming a party! neither one too many, or too few, and that the addition or diminution of a single person would quite have spoiled it. Except

B 2

Sir

Sir Charles Hastings, (cried Miss Mor-
dant;) we might have spared him,
without suffering much from his ab-
sence, for I don't believe the poor man
spoke three words during the whole
week. I think, (cried Lady Maitland)
it was extremely rude of him to leave
us at Stanton, under the pretence of
an engagement to his aunt, instead of
attending us upon our excursion, as he
voluntarily promised to do. Oh, Miss
Maitland was to have been of the
party then, (cried Albert;) we may
thank her for his promise of coming
with us at all. I always thought him
stupid, (said Miss Windsor.) I take him
to be a man of very little taste or dis-
cernment. He would else have disco-
vered the perfections of his fair neigh-
bour before this time, (said Lord Bel-
ford, with a smile not wholly free from
satire;) as he has shown such a want of
both upon this occasion, we will not
suppose

suppose he can possess them on any other. I think Sir Charles Hastings both a sensible and pleasing man, (said Mrs. Mordant;) and I cannot help suspecting some little secret partiality lurks in Miss Maitland's heart, or she never could have refused so accomplished a lover.

Sir George, who had before only addressed a short common-place how-do-ye-do compliment to Juliana, now turned, and viewed her with some attention; and in a few moments, carelessly rising from his seat, and throwing himself upon a sofa, which was close to the chair on which she sat, he told her, he was charged with many remembrances from their friends at Furze-Hill. I shall so soon have the pleasure of seeing them, (answered Juliana) that it is needless to inquire after more than their healths. I hope not soon, (cried Mrs. Mordant;) we shall not consent to

part with you a great while yet. Next week, (replied Juliana) I must take leave of you; I have absolutely promised Mrs. Maitland to return at that time. But I don't believe you will perform your promise, my love, (said Lady Maitland;) at least you must first hear what I have to say to you, and if your time is not otherwise destined, I will request half an hour of your company in my dressing room before dinner, when I hope to induce you to alter your present determination. Juliana bowed an assent, though certain that it would require more eloquence than her Ladyship possessed, to persuade her to remain at Mordant-Place longer than she had already appointed.

Sir George said he was extremely unfortunate in always losing her company; but hoped he should soon return to his mother's, when he trusted she would afford him the enjoyment of
her

her society. He talked of Furze-Hill, of Mrs. Maitland, of her School, in short he talked of every thing he thought would be most agreeable to her, and their conversation continued so long, that Miss Mordant was visibly uneasy, and Miss Windfor displeased. Albert whispered his sister, that he feared her Baronet was in considerable danger; adding, I am not sure that nature has incommoded him with a heart; but if his cousin should happen to take his fancy now after all, it would be really provoking. Good man, (cried Miss Mordant) do address thy wit to somebody that admires it. Go and talk to Lady Maitland, she'll laugh with thee at any time.

Albert then arose, and seating himself on the other side of Juliana, told her, he was very sorry to hear the bad news. What bad news! (said she with a look of attention.) Have not you

B 4 heard,

Baron, (answered he) that all the single ladies in the country, from the age of fourteen to that of forty, have joined in preferring a bill of indictment at the next quarter session, against a person of the name of Juliana Maitland? That is bad news indeed, (replied she, smiling;) but pray what is her crime? She is accused of nothing less than the sin of witchcraft, (answered Albert;) of using certain words, and looks, and other magical charms, by which she seduces the hearts of all who converse with her; unlawfully robbing other ladies of their lovers, and leaving them to pine away in envy and despair. There is not the least doubt of the facts being well established; and if the jury is a female one, you have no chance of escaping. I have nothing but my innocence to trust to, (replied our heroine) of which almost every one I have conversed with can witness, which certainly

tainly is no small comfort ; for, of all deaths, burning would be among the last I would willingly choose. Why to be sure, (replied Albert) it is rather honourable than desirable, and yet there is no avoiding destiny ; which is the reason that so many honest men come to the gallows. If talking nonsense were held criminal in law, I know who would quickly be there, (cried Mrs. Mordant, with a smile.) If it were criminal in law, (answered Albert) I will maintain it to be excellent in physic ; without it half the world would die of spleen and vapours ; there is nothing so stupifying as sense ; sense, sober sense for ever. As he spake these words, a large cat, of which Lady Maitland was very fond, leaped from the sofa, upon which it had been sleeping, and was walking across the room ; when Albert caught him up, not very tenderly, crying, Oh, Tom, you and

B 5

I have

10 HENRY AND ISABELLA.

I have not had a little conversation a great while; come, have you forgotten your exercise? Saying which, he began to teach the animal to jump over his hands, with which he formed a bar for that purpose. Be quiet Albert, (cried her Ladyship) you are never easy but when you are teasing that poor creature; I believe you have a particular spite against him. It would not be surprising, (answered Albert) if I should; all the world knows that he is my professed rival, and that he is treated with a degree of favour and indulgence to which I dare not aspire; if you treated us both alike, I should bear it with patience; but you never take me upon your lap, and kiss, and stroke me, and call me dear sweet creature. Strange wretch, (cried Lady Maitland) but come, let Tom go. There's nothing so troublesome as these grown boys, (said Miss Windfor;) they have all the
ill

ill tricks of the young ones, and one can't beat them.

Lady Maitland then rose, and after some scolding, half in jest, half in earnest, released her favourite from the hands of his tormentor, and taking him under her arm, quitted the room, giving Juliana a look, signifying a wish that she would follow her.

Our heroine felt no great inclination for a lecture, by which she knew it was impossible for her to profit. She however arose, and followed to her Ladyship's dressing-room, where, as soon as she entered, being requested to shut the door and sit down, she obeyed, and a few moments passed in silent expectation of what was to be the subject of their conference; though of that she had not much doubt, any more than of the reproaches and passion in which it was likely to end. More than a minute passed in a kind of doubting

B 6

pause,

pause, when Lady Maitland, scarce appearing to know how, or where to begin, addressed her with a look uncommonly serious.

I think, (said she) my dear Juliana is convinced that I love her with the utmost degree of fondness; I hope she is sensible that some duty, as well as as gratitude, is due to a mother, and, that both together will influence her in an affair upon which I have set my whole heart: you know I mean your — My dear madam, (interrupted Juliana,) pardon me for presuming to reply, without attending to what you were about to say, but permit me to intreat, that you will not repeat a request with which I have already declared it is not in my power to comply, without violating every sense of honour and rectitude. Give me leave, once for all, to declare, that I would rather die, than marry Lord Belford!

And,

And, to put the matter past every remaining doubt, I will venture to inform you, that both my heart and promise are engaged to another, and to hope that you will favour my choice with your approbation. Now the secret is out! (cried her Ladyship, with far more composure than Juliana expected.) And so you presume to hope that I will consent to your marriage with a young fellow who has nothing to recommend him but a tolerable person, and an intolerable assurance, and that the great fortune you expect shall be equally divided between the sons of a woman I hate and despise? It is very possible, that you may hate Mrs. Maitland, madam, (answered our heroine.) Merit is often an object of aversion; but she is a character which it is in nobody's power to despise. We will not dispute that point at present, (answered Lady Maitland.) I tell you once more, that

that I hate her, nor will I ever consent to your marriage with her favourite son. Had Sir George and you liked each other, upon certain conditions, I might have permitted the match to take place. He is a man of fashion. But Henry! the very counterpart of his mother, except that he is a little handsomer, which heaven knows may easily be. His resemblance to one who has been more than a mother to me, (replied Juliana,) is the strongest recommendation he can well possess. Pardon my sincerity, madam! but I do not think that either the duty or gratitude I owe to you, demands the sacrifice of my happiness and honour, both of which I must wholly give up, could I prevail upon myself, from mean, and shamefully mercenary motives, to bestow my hand upon a man who is not merely indifferent—who is inexpressibly disagreeable to me; and I should

should greatly injure both, should I refuse it to one who inherits every good and amiable quality, for no better reason, than because he does not possess that of which I have already more than enough.

Don't be too sure that you have such mighty abundance, (cried Lady Maitland.) I have already told you, that my power extended further than you imagined; I will now inform you wherein it consists. Know then, that I can at pleasure deprive you of every pretence to fortune or consequence. A word from me would render you friendless and a beggar.

Juliana was silent from surprize; and the positive calmness with which these words were pronounced, for the first time infused into her mind a doubtfulness of her own security. Will you (continued Lady Maitland, raising her voice to an authoritative pitch) marry
 Lord

Lord Belford, or resolve to encounter the misfortunes your folly and perverseness draw upon you? Once for all, then, (replied Juliana, in a steady voice) I will not marry Lord Belford. I will sooner, to use your own words, be friendless, and a beggar. It is well, (replied Lady Maitland;) henceforth then be both, for know that you are not the daughter of Sir George Maitland, that you are no child of mine.

Juliana started. The colour rushed into her cheek, and was instantly succeeded by a deadly paleness. Her knowledge of the speaker's character made no action, for which any motive of vanity or revenge could be assigned, appear improbable. Her heart never had acknowledged the tender ties of filial love, and seemed to require no proof that more than a nominal consanguinity had never subsisted between them. But if she was not the daughter

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ter of Sir George Maitland, what and who was she? This she trembled to ask; when she attempted to speak, her voice faltered; and the dreadful words, — friendless and a beggar, — seemed to vibrate in her ears.

You are surprized, (said her Ladyship) it is a shock you might have avoided. Had you acted, as became my daughter, you never should have known that you were not such. I told you my power over you was greater than you believed; you now feel that it is so; for upon my will, it depends whether you shall continue to possess the advantages you have hitherto enjoyed, and the large fortune, which in a few months will be your own, or become a poor forlorn creature, without name, consequence, or a single guinea to secure a place wherein to shelter yourself. Good heaven, (at last, exclaimed Juliana, recovering from the amazement

amazement which had occasioned her silence) what motive, what inducement—I will tell you, (replied Lady Maitland with great unconcern :) I have already said that I hate Mrs. Maitland; my aversion to her was once much stronger than it now is; to mortify and disappoint her, would have alone been motive strong enough to induce me to undertake any thing which was not attended with danger to myself; but I had still a further view. A small difference had, for some time, subsisted between my husband and myself, as there was reason to believe that he would not live long, and I knew myself to be but slenderly provided for, my father having too eagerly seized a kind of half offer of marriage made to me by Sir George, to stand upon settlements. I thought it was necessary to do something, in order, if possible, to reconcile myself again to his affections;

affections ; and, if possible, in part, recover the influence I once had over him. I thought the best way of effecting this, was to persuade him that he was a father ; and a convenient circumstance occurring, I completed my design, and so intirely imposed upon him, that he never, to the day of his death, suspected the deception I had practised. My whole dependence did not rest upon Sir George's returning affection ; I built my hopes of advantage equally upon the influence a mother naturally possesses over the mind of a daughter, by which I hoped to share the fortune, of which it gave me so much pleasure to deprive the Maitlands. The manner in which Sir George left you to the care of his sister-in-law, in a great measure defeated the latter part of my expectation during your minority ; but I will now tell you what they are, as likewise upon what terms
you

you may still continue to possess both rank and affluence, even beyond what the real daughter of Sir George Maitland could have had a right to expect. I need not fear your divulging my secret, (continued her Ladyship) it being of more than equal importance to yourself; I shall therefore, without reserve, tell you in what manner I have acted, what I intend to do, and what it will be necessary for you to do.

It has long been my resolution, as soon as you came of age, to inform you of your real birth, to let you know how intirely you depend upon me for the enjoyment of your large fortune, and to demand such a share of it as would make me easy in my circumstances. This was my intention; but the generosity of Lord Belford intirely altered them. He offered to settle half your income upon me for life, if I would prevail upon you to become his wife.

wife. This was more than I had the least thought of obtaining from you; two thousand pounds a year being the utmost extent of my hopes; you will not, therefore, wonder that I have tried so earnestly to persuade you to the match, as it would not only have secured me such an addition to my jointure, but saved me the disagreeable necessity of this explanation. I must next inform you, that Lord Belford is now acquainted with the affair; and such is his great love for you, that he is willing to overlook the meanness of your birth, to receive you for his wife, and give you the intire disposal of the other half of your estate; out of which you may assign whatever pension you judge proper to your father and mother, and silence the few other persons who are privy to the secret. Surely, you ought not only to feel gratitude, but to love one who ex-
presses

expresses so uncommon an affection for you. At all events, it will be proper that you should put on the appearance of it, for you have now no choice left, but cheerfully and thankfully to give your hand to Lord Belford.

Yes, madam, (cried Juliana) I have another choice left; that of embracing my original obscurity, and relinquishing a situation in life which I have no right to fill, and a fortune which has already been too long detained from its rightful possessors.

Hark'e, Juliana, (said Lady Maitland) this is no time for quixotism. You cannot seriously think of giving up a fortune which is so necessary to you? Do you consider what you will be? I would rather be any thing, (cried our heroine) than an impostor, a common cheat. What enjoyment could fortune afford me, when every convenience

venience it procured would but reproach me with the guilty means by which I obtained it. The guilt of obtaining it was not yours, (answered Lady Maitland) and therefore need not give you any disturbance. But it would become mine, (replied Juliana) should I consent to contune the imposition, which I never will do, be the consequence to myself what it will. But tell me, madam, (continued she) since I am not your daughter, to whom is it that I owe my birth? You are the daughter of Mrs. Martin, (answered her Ladyship.) Of Mrs. Martin, (repeated our heroine faintly.) Yes, of Mrs. Martin, (returned Lady Maitland,) but that is of little importance; if you will allow her a trifling salary, she will never molest you. It is still in your power to spend the rest of your life in the same ease and elegance with which you have hitherto been accustomed

customed to live. Nay, with additional splendor, for Lord Belford is the most generous of men; you will have the entire command of his immense fortune. I have already told your Ladyship, (replied Juliana) that were I poor and dependent, I would not relieve myself out of so unpleasant a situation by a violation of every sacred duty, and as such I should regard a marriage with a man I can neither love or esteem. I have now a painful opportunity of proving to you, that what I then spoke, were the real sentiments of my heart; and that the principles of right, which I imbibed in the days of ease and happiness, I have resolution to practise in those of adversity.

You are surely not so lost to reason and common sense, (cried Lady Maitland, with an alarmed countenance) as to discover what will completely ruin you? I will do what I ought (replied

plied Juliana) be the consequence what it may. You astonish me (exclaimed her Ladyship) do you consider to what a wretched situation your folly will reduce you? I know to what situation guilt will reduce me, (answered our heroine) and to avoid that, I will encounter every difficulty into which friendless poverty can plunge me.

Had the difficulties into which Juliana's scrupulous adherence to the straight, but too often thorny path of rectitude, were likely to plunge her, been all Lady Maitland had to apprehend from a discovery of the shameful imposition she had practised, she would have cared very little about the matter. But the loss of her promised four thousand pounds a year, and still more, the consequences she had to dread from the resentment of her late husband's relations, were serious considerations. For even should Sir George,

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with whom she had always lived upon terms of intimacy, and over whom her relations had considerable influence, be generous enough to pardon the injury she had intended to do him, the affair would inevitably be known to all the world; and how should she be able to show her face, after having committed an action of which it was the interest of every family of fortune in the kingdom to express a pointed disapprobation. On these accounts she endeavoured, to the very utmost of her power, to persuade our heroine to keep the whole a secret, and accept the splendid offers made her by Lord Belford. But finding that she was not to be prevailed upon, that she was actually preparing to leave the room with a professed intention of writing a note of information to Sir George Maitland, she suddenly stopped her; Hold, Juliana, (said she) if you are not absolutely

absolutely bent upon ruin, hear what I have now to propose. I have so long affected to love you as a daughter, that I have conceived for you a real tenderness, and shall be very unhappy to see you stripped of every expectation you have so long entertained, and turned into the world, without knowing how to provide for even the common necessities of life. As a proof of this affection, I will not only promise to preserve the secret of your birth inviolate; but will give up your marriage with Lord Belford, and consent to that with Mr. Maitland. By this means the family will be deprived of no part of what belongs to them, it will only be divided between the brothers, which will be much better than giving the whole to one; thus you may escape the misfortunes which threaten you, without the smallest violation of your

C 2

prin-

principles, and render both yourself and the man you love happy.

Juliana paused. Never was temptation stronger, never did it present itself in a form more delusive. To escape from distress and danger on one hand; and to secure all that she had ever looked forward to, as happiness, on the other. She paused, but it was only for a moment. No sooner did the idea of imposition and injustice present themselves to her mind, than her virtuous heart rejected them with abhorrence. Ah, how, (exclaimed she) shall I dare to give my hand to a worthy and amiable man, under a fictitious name and character? How should I endure his expressions of gratitude and tenderness? How should I bear the eyes of Mrs. Maitland? How return her caresses, or those of my dear Mary? Would not my confusion betray the secret that lurked in my guilty heart?

Yes,

Yes, that conscious guilt would poison every source of pleasure, and carry wretchedness into the bosom of domestic felicity.

It was in vain that Lady Maitland endeavoured to reason, or ridicule her out of these opinions, they were fixed too deeply in her soul ever to be removed ; her pure mind, unspotted by the habits which a longer acquaintance with the world too often renders familiar, retained its native quick sense of vice and virtue ; and to avoid the one, and embrace the other, were to it instinctive, and required not a train of reasonings to fix its determinations. She had no sooner reached her own apartment, than a summons to dinner arrived ; but requesting, in a message to Mrs. Mordant, to be excused, on account of indisposition, which she might well plead, her whole frame being disordered by the agony of her

C 3

mind,

mind, she sat down, and in as few words as the occasion would admit, informed Sir George Maitland of the discovery she had just made; intreated his pardon, and that of his family, for the innocent imposition she had been guilty of, and intirely resigned to him all pretensions to her present possessions, as well as those she expected to possess. The moment she had finished, she rang the bell, and her maid appearing, gave the letter into her hands, directing, that it should immediately be sent to the Baronet.

No sooner was her maid retired, than throwing herself upon a sofa, she clasped her hands together, and looking up with fervor, indulged for a moment, the triumph of a heart conscious of its own rectitude. But though humanity, supported by religion and virtue, may endure calamity with firmness and resignation; vanity and enthusiasm

thufiafm alone can give it the power of exulting in it. A fhower of tears which fell from the lovely eyes of our heroine, and the fighs which feemed to burft from the very bottom of her heart, acknowledged the weaknefs of the nature to which that heart did fo much honour ; and ſhe was fitting in a melancholy reverie, out of which it is probable her own refolution, would not quickly have roused her ; when ſome one tapped gently at the door. She rofe in a kind of haſty confuſion, as one, who is ſuddenly awakened from a profound ſleep, and advancing two or three ſteps towards it, ſtopped, as if afraid to go further ; but, upon the ſignal of deſired admittance being again repeated, ſhe recollected herſelf ſufficiently to open it ; when with much concern and ſoftnefs in her aſpect, Mrs. Mordant entered.

C 4

Juliana

Juliana felt every thing but the confusion of guilt; but, the kind sorrow which Mrs. Mordant expressed for her misfortune, and the applause she bestowed, upon her uncommon resolution and virtue, in giving up so much, rather than consent to the continuance of an imposition, which was so intirely unsuspected, and might therefore, have been carried on with so much safety; by degrees removed the uneasy sensations, which her presence at first occasioned; and she felt considerable comfort from her assurances of continued friendship, and every assistance and consolation in her power to give.

When she had by degrees soothed, and in some measure recomposed, the mind of our heroine, she proceeded to inform her, that Lord Belford, so far from feeling his attachment to her weakened by the change in her circumstances, was more in love than ever, and



and had commissioned her to offer any terms, that might induce her to bless him with the hand he had so long sought in vain. She then proceeded to express her admiration of his Lordship's constancy and generosity, both of which, she said, were very uncommon in men of his rank and fortune, who having every day the choice of so many, seldom made themselves uneasy about, or took much trouble with any one, however great her beauty or accomplishments; and concluded, with declaring her hope, that so much lover-like merit, would make a suitable impression upon a heart so generally just and grateful as her's, and that she would permit her to carry back a favorable answer to the Earl, who was then waiting for it with impatience.

Our heroine hesitated. A thousand thoughts took possession of her mind, as it were in the same moment. She

C. 5

was

was poor, she was friendless; the illegitimate offspring of a woman, whose manners she disliked, and whose understanding she despised, and whose morals she detested. Of the only man she ever could love, she must now think no more; for should he even be generous enough to overlook the alteration in her circumstances and situation, and offer to fulfil the engagement he was under to her, it would be her place to convince him that she deserved his affection, by steadily refusing what would so much debase and injure him. There was but one way, one possible way left. In the title of countess, her want of name, her dishonour would be lost, and should she live to hear that of dowager added to it—This thought was almost stealing through her mind, before its improper tendency was detected; but a sudden recollection displayed it at once in its proper light, and

and it was banished with aversion. At the same instant the idea of Lady Frances Seward, and the cruel treatment she had received from this specious man, presented itself before her. You will, no doubt, madam, said she, (addressing Mrs. Mordant) greatly blame me, for declining the apparently generous proposal, now made me by Lord Belford; but in answer to it, be good enough to ask him, if he has a right to make it; and, this I presume, will be a sufficient one. Mrs. Mordant used many arguments to persuade her, to what she thought so greatly to her advantage; but finding her absolutely against it, she asked in what manner she intended to dispose of herself, and whether she thought of returning to Furze-Hill.

Never! never! (exclaimed our heroine with fervor) never will I again behold it or its dear inhabitants. Ah,

C 6

little

Little did I think, (continued she, the
 tears flowing fast down her lovely face)
 little did I think, when I last embraced
 them, that we were parting for ever.
 And why should you part for ever, (said
 Mrs. Mordant;) as you are perfectly
 innocent of all intention to injure them,
 you have a right to expect a continua-
 tion of their friendship, and the exer-
 tion of their good offices; I neither
 doubt of their friendship, or goodness,
 (replied Juliana) I rather fear, that they
 would wish to do more for me, than I
 ought to accept. This, however, I
 will not put to the proof. The ac-
 complishments that I have acquired as
 amusements, may now answer a more
 important purpose, that of gaining an
 independent subsistence; and I am de-
 termined, that neither pride or indo-
 lence shall prevent my acting properly
 in the new character I am to assume
 and support. If that is your resolu-
 tion.

tion, (answered Mrs. Mordant) I may perhaps be of use to you. About fifty miles distant from hence there is a family related to Mr. Mordant, who have requested me to inquire for a governess, to superintend the education of their daughters. If you choose to undertake the task, I will recommend you in such terms as shall secure your reception.

A family who lived at a greater distance from Mordant-Place, would have been more desirable to our heroine; but she had no choice, and instantly resolved; that false pride should not divert her steps from the path of duty, however thorny and uneven it might be. She thanked Mrs. Mordant for her friendly proposal, and begged she would favor her so far as to write immediately, it being her wish to remove that very afternoon. She was however, persuaded to give up such an intention,

tention, as it was already drawing towards evening; and Mrs. Mordant promised to have a letter in readiness for her, as early in the morning as would be agreeable to her. She then informed her, that Sir George was intirely reconciled to Lady Maitland, with whom he had promised to appear at all the public places next winter; and that he expressed great pity for her, declaring, that if his mother, brother, and sister were inclined to do any thing, he would willingly contribute to her support.

Juliana smiled through her tears, but it was a smile rather of disdain than approbation, or gratitude. I will be obliged to nobody, (said she) for my support, while I am able to procure it myself. Should the time arrive when I am no longer so, I will then thank Sir George for his offered kindness. Do you not mean to see your mother?
(said

(said Mrs. Mordant.) If you choose to pay her a visit before you go to the Grove, (the house of Mr. Mordant's relation) the chariot is at your service, and her house is not more than a three hours drive from hence. If ever it should be in my power to be useful to her, (answered our heroine) I will see her; but if it is left to my own choice, upon no other occasion. I cannot think that any other kind of duty is due from me; and what have I to expect from such a mother? But I—I, (hesitated she) had a father. I could not ask Lady Maitland. Do you know madam? I am sorry, (replied Mrs. Mordant) that I am able to give you so mortifying an account. I asked the question, just now, in hopes of hearing he was at least a gentleman; but to my surprise was told, that Miss Henly had the folly to fall in love with a handsome footman, who attended upon
Lady

Lady Maitland, and that he was your father. Nay, I will tell you all, that knowing the truth, you may act as your own good sense shall direct you. Before the affair was suspected, Jones, (for that is his name) was dismissed by the late Sir George for drunkenness. He has since been turned out of several families for the same fault, not without considerable cause to suspect his honesty, and is now waiter at a small Inn on the London road.

Jukana strove to smile. She struggled to rise superior to the enmity of nature and fortune; but the effort was too great for her weakened spirits, she sunk back on a sofa, and fainted away. Mrs. Mordant was greatly alarmed, she rang the bell with violence, and a servant appearing, ordered some hartshorn and water to be brought, and the housekeeper to come up; adding, tell her that Miss Maitland is
very

very ill. The messenger had scarce returned with the ordered restorative, before the whole company out of the parlour, who had heard the report of Juliana's indisposition, partly excited by pity, and partly by curiosity, entered the apartment. Mrs. Mordant gently rubbed some of the spirit upon her temples, while the house-keeper endeavored to get a small quantity mixed with water into her mouth. Their efforts were at last successful, she sighed deep, and opened her languid eyes; when the first object which presented itself before them was Henry Maitland.

His cheeks were pale, and his looks fixed upon her with the most anxious tenderness. The moment she beheld him, the blood rushed into her cheeks, and the expression of her eyes suddenly changed from languid insensibility, to surprise and pleasure: she started up, and

and giving him her hand, which he eagerly kissed, I know, (said she) you are come to deliver me out of all my troubles; every body else torments, but you will pity me. I will do more, (cried Henry, in an agony, observing the unusual wildness in her fine eyes;) I will admire, protect, love you for ever! As he spake these words she seemed to recover her recollection, and withdrawing her hand from his, and applying it to her forehead, sunk upon the sofa in a shower of tears.

Mrs. Mordant then began to inquire how she did; her example was followed by Lady Maitland, who appeared quite at ease, and unconscious of being the base, cruel author of her misfortunes. Miss Windfor and Miss Mordant seemed preparing to exert what they esteemed an equal degree of politeness; when Henry, observing how much their presence, and insulting pity discomposed

composed her, begged they would retire, and permit him to speak a few words to her alone. Mrs. Mordant was immediately going; but Lady Maitland assuming an air of consequence, said, she thought it by no means proper. That Mrs. or Miss Mordant were fitter to be left with her, if they would be good enough to undertake the disagreeable task of reasoning with her, upon the folly of fretting about what could not be remedied. Henry, casting upon her a look of severe contempt, answered, that the lovely unfortunate before them, was no longer a part of her concern; adding, go and enjoy the thought of having injured the most perfect of human creatures to the very utmost of your power; leave the remainder of her life to take its course under another influence, you have exerted yours to the utmost.

In

In spite of Lady Maitland's unfeeling folly, a blush deepened the rouge upon her cheeks ; but instantly banishing a sensibility which was unnatural to her, she replied, that they might do as they pleased, with all her heart ; and with an affected toss of her head quitted the room. Mrs. Mordant then recommending a little more hartshorn and water to Juliana, and saying she hoped to hear of her being very soon quite well, walked after her, Miss Windsor, and Miss Mordant were constrained to follow their example ; but the former casting upon our heroine a look of satirical disdain, said, no doubt she would soon be better, having got so excellent a comforter.

The moment they were gone, Juliana pressed Henry to follow them. Leave me, (said she) I intreat you ! your friendship to me is now improper ; alas, you know not who or what I am !

Leave

Leave you, my lovely friend, (exclaimed Henry;) no, never! My impatience to see you brought me here some days before that upon which you had kindly promised to accompany me home. This place is not a fit residence for you; let me, I conjure you! let me prevail upon you to return with me this very afternoon; the nights are light and pleasant; we will not stop upon the road, and shall be at Furze-Hill before the family are stirring in the morning. Return to Furze-Hill, (exclaimed Juliana;) no, no! that must never be. Sure you have not heard of the change.—I see no change in my charming Juliana, (cried Henry;) neither Mrs. Maitland or your Mary will see any. Are you not as good, as fair, as amiable, as accomplished,—Ah, (interrupted she) but where is my fortune, my—Gone, (returned Henry;) but mine is not despicable, and I know
my

my Juliana can be content without splendor. Did she think it was her fortune that I loved? No, (answered she;) and were I still Juliana Maitland, I would not scruple to share your's. You shall be so, (cried Henry, kissing her hand in a rapture) you shall be the daughter of Mrs. Maitland, the sister of Mary, and the beloved, the adored wife of your happy Henry. Oh, never, never! (replied she) never will I bring disgrace upon a family, upon persons I love so much. You surely do not know the particulars.—Yes, yes, (answered he) I know all of which envy and malice itself can inform me. Of this you will be convinced, when I tell you that Miss Windfor was my informer. And to what does it amount? Does it impute to you a single fault? Does it tarnish one of your excellencies? How then can it alter my affection? Do you think my mother, or
sister

sister mean enough to be influenced by such circumstances? Surely you know them too well. Are you not as dear to them as they are to each other? And will not every sorrow you feel be theirs? Yes, my adored charmer, we will all unite to soften and efface the impression this sudden change of circumstances has made upon your mind; and it shall be the study of my future life, to render them the only painful ones you shall ever experience.

Generous! worthy Henry! (exclaimed our heroine;) but it is no more than I ought to have expected from you. Then pausing a moment, Mrs. Maitland, (said she) is not yet acquainted with the misfortunes that have befallen me; will you return to Furze-hill, and be yourself her informer? From your report of the reception she gives it, I shall know how to form my final resolution. I will do

do any thing, and every thing you request, (answered he;) but in my own opinion a letter, with which I will dispatch my servant, and which you shall read previous to its being sent, will do equally well. Nay, better; for you will then have Mrs. Maitland's sentiments under her own hand, uninfluenced by any thing but her justice and affection. I have a particular reason, (replied Juliana) for requesting that you will yourself be the messenger. perhaps, (continued she, blushing) I do not wish her to be quite uninfluenced.

Henry was in a rapture. He joyfully promised to set out immediately, saying, he would travel all night, and be back again by the middle of the next day. To which our heroine replied, that she should, by no means, be satisfied with so hasty an answer from Mrs. Maitland. At the moment you relate my distress, (said she) pity may possibly

possibly sway her judgment. She must, at least, have a day to deliberate, to view the affair in every different light. If, after this, I receive her full approbation, my heart will know upon what to repose itself, and no future repentance will cloud the transitory sunshine of hasty determination. You must not leave Furze Hill till the morning after to-morrow.

Henry used many arguments to induce her to consent to his return the next day, but she resolutely persisted in her request, declaring, that nothing less would at all satisfy her; upon which, after many intreaties, that she would be chearful, and not suffer unpleasant reflections to prey upon her mind, after several times going to the door of her apartment, and once as far as to the end of the gallery, and then turning back to renew his request, he took leave.

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Upon

Upon entering the parlour, he found Lady Maitland, Miss Windfor, Miss Mordant and Sir George, diverting themselves with the length of the tête-a-tête between Henry and Miss Henly, as they now affected to call our heroine. Mrs. Mordant was giving the mortified Peer an account of the success of her commission; and Albert, who was excluded from one of the parties, and had too much good-nature to enjoy the wit of the other, sat alone, ruminating upon the changes and chances of this mortal life. Upon Henry's entering, Mrs. Mordant asked him how he had left his fair friend? She is perfectly composed, (replied he :) Then assuming a very serious air, Let me, madam, (said he, addressing Mrs. Mordant) particularly recommend her to your attention and kindness. She will not, I fancy, wish to quit her apartment during the few days of her continuance

continuance under your protection: visit her there, I intreat you, and do not suffer her mind to dwell upon gloomy objects. Should any thing but your own goodness be wanting to induce you to the performance of so pleasing an act of humanity, be assured you will confer the most lasting obligation upon Mrs. Maitland, my sister, and my self. Mrs. Mordant assured him she would omit nothing in her power to console the lovely mourner. After which, asking Sir George if he had any commands to Furze Hill, and taking a slight leave of the rest of the company, he mounted his horse, (which, before his entering the room, he had ordered to be got ready,) and rode off at a pace which expressed the ardour of his disposition, and the strength and impatience of his affections.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A COUNTRY GENTLEMAN'S FAMILY.

IN pursuance of her promise to Henry, Mrs. Mordant, having deprived the poor Peer of every hope of succeeding with our heroine, as soon as the ladies removed from the dining-parlour to the drawing-room, went up to her apartment, where, instead of finding her overwhelmed with affliction, as she feared, she beheld her busied in placing her clothes in her travelling trunk, a task she was obliged almost wholly to perform herself, as her weeping maid was nearly incapable of giving her any assistance.

Upon Mrs. Mordant's entrance, she presented a small cabinet to her, requesting that she would do her the favour to have it safely delivered to Mrs. Maitland ;

Maitland; adding, that she must take the liberty to remind her of the letter of recommendation with which, she had promised to furnish her; which she requested her to prepare that evening, as it was her intention to deliver it at the Grove before noon the next day; and that she should esteem it a very particular obligation, if she would keep the place to which she was removed a secret from Lady Maitland, Lord Belford, and, if possible, from every one to whom she was known; but especially from Mr. Maitland. This Mrs. Mordant readily and positively promised, not being sorry to find she desired to conceal herself from a young man for whom she had a considerable regard, and whose future prospects she thought would be greatly hurt by a marriage with a girl who had, as it now appeared, neither fortune or family to recommend her.

D 3

Having

Having arranged every thing to her satisfaction, and received her letter from Mrs. Mordant, of whom she took a very kind leave, our heroine retired to rest, or rather she lay down upon her bed. Her body reposed, but her mind was agitated by ten thousand uneasy reflections. Sometimes she determined to struggle through every difficulty with steadiness and resolution, to support her change of situation with fortitude, and, what she lost in fortune and rank, to regain in that dignity of soul which enables true philosophy to sustain adversity. Sometimes fear of a world to which she was so much a stranger, would make her shrink back from the uncertain contest, and ardently long to repose herself in the arms of those dear friends, who she had every reason to believe would kindly stretch them out to receive her. On this side of the question love, too, was an

an eloquent pleader. Henry Maitland was one, was the principal of those friends to whom she should be so greatly obliged. Could obligations to him ever be painful or oppressive? could she not return them all, more than return them by her friendship and affection? She represented him to her heart as the worthy rector of a pleasant country village. She viewed their convenient, snug parsonage; their garden stored with every variety of fruit and vegetable; she accompanied him to visit his poor and sick parishioners; she leaned upon his arm as they walked to church, heard him perform the sacred office with unaffected, manly devotion. She saw the honest farmers and their ruddy wives and daughters flocking around him as they returned, making their rustic bows, and paying him thanks for the excellent instructions he had given them, while the poor blef-

fed the kind friend and patron, who, while he pointed out the way to heaven, and taught them to secure the happiness of a future life, by his benevolence and active goodness, rendered their present pilgrimage supportable. Sometimes Mrs. Maitland, and Mary were their visitants, and sometimes she and her Henry were temporary inhabitants of Furze Hill.

From these sweet momentary delusions, she would suddenly awake to the keenest sense of her real condition. A poor out-cast, without fortune, family, or even parents whom she could acknowledge, but with the deep blush of almost guilty confusion! Should she intrude herself among those who looked up to their ancestors with conscious exaltation, and hoped to transmit to their posterity the honours and virtues they had received from them, would not her children despise her, and
would

would not all those who loved her husband, however their affections might at present overrule their judgment, hereafter look upon her as the person who had stopped the rise of his fortunes, and fixed him in that mediocrity of life, which, unfettered by such an embarrassing engagement, they might have soared far above? Nay, generous and affectionate as he was, might he not sometimes secretly regret a circumstance, which, by entangling his heart and honour in the misfortunes of another, had, in effect, rendered them his own? She would not put his love to so severe a trial. She would fly, forever, from the presence of those who could not increase her happiness, but at the expence of their own. She would alone be the victim of her own misfortunes.

In this resolution she arose before five o'clock the following morning.

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At six, according to her directions, a hired chaise and pair were at the door; and about four in the afternoon, she arrived at the Grove.

The house, which was a very good one, stood in a low but pleasant situation. It was almost surrounded by a fine navigable river; and the grounds beyond it rising every way in a gentle ascent, formed a beautiful amphitheatre, which had a peculiarity extremely pleasing to the eye. The approach to it was through a fine wood; in passing along which, you caught several delightful views of the house, the river, and surrounding banks, several parts of which were finely wooded. Juliana was charmed with the appearance of every thing about her; her mind, naturally susceptible of pleasing impressions, felt relieved of half the load by which it was oppressed; and she looked forward with a certain expectation

peccation of finding the inhabitants of this sweet retreat, as amiable as it was delightful.

When the chaise stopped at the door, she enquired of an awkward kind of footman, if Mrs. Burton was at home, and was answered, that he could not tell, but would go and ask. After waiting near a quarter of an hour, he returned and told her his mistress desired to know what business she had with her; upon which she gave him Mrs. Mordant's letter, requesting him to deliver that to his lady, and it would explain the cause of her taking the liberty of waiting upon her. In a few minutes, he again appeared, and delivered his mistress's compliments, and a request that she would walk in. She was conducted into a very good parlour, the furniture of which, though not modern, was handsome, and in good repair; the only thing which of-

fended the eye of our heroine, was several portraits, which appeared to represent a father, mother, and children, every one of whom greatly resembled the latter, and each other; and all wore in their countenances, the marks of stupidity, blended with a kind of vacant pertness, which together, was particularly disgusting. Juliana could not help wondering, that any one should wish to transmit such faces to posterity; and ardently to hope, that they were not the representatives of her intended pupils. Upon this subject her mind was employed when the door opened, and Mrs. Burton and her three daughters entered, at the first glance, assuring Juliana, that they were a part of the originals, from whom the faces upon the wall were copied.

So, Miss, (said Mrs. Burton, as she entered) I find you are the young person my cousin Mordant has sent to
be

be a governess to my girls. Well, you seem to be a very genteel pretty kind of body: pray what can you do? I suppose you can speak French? Juliana replied, that if, upon Mrs. Mordant's recommendation, she thought fit to place the young ladies under her care, she hoped it would be in her power to instruct them in all those branches of education which are generally thought necessary, among which a competent knowledge of the French language would certainly be included. Can you do shell-work and embroidery? (said Mrs. Burton) and teach them to write an Italian hand? You won't be angry, I hope, (continued she, seeing her look surprised) at my asking a good many questions. I suppose you will expect to be paid for your trouble, and before we part with our money, we would know a little for what. And pray, mama, (cried one of the young ladies)

is not she to teach us to play upon the spinnet, and dance the minuet De La-Cour? And I hope, (exclaimed another) she will show me how to do up my hair a little better! Miss James's governess has taught her to do her's up, just as if she had had a French hair-dresser. Yes, (rejoined the third) and she has taught her to wash gauze and *blown* lace, so that it looks for all the world as if it was new. Now you know, mama, if ours can learn us to do so, it will save almost as much as her wages come to. Who gave you all leave to chatter so fast, (cried Mrs. Burton, angrily;) I dare say Mrs. Mor-dant would not have sent any body but who is proper. She is a very civil woman, and I like her well. Yes, (cried Miss Burton) she looks very good-natured; I like her a vast deal better than Miss Harland. Oh yes, a vast deal, (exclaimed the second daughter, whose
name

name was Peggy) Miss Harland is so proud. Well, if she is proud, (answered their mother) she has something to be proud of, she is a Lord's daughter. Oh, to be sure, (exclaimed Miss Hannah, the youngest of the three,) if I was a Lord's daughter, I should be proud enough. And what would you have to be proud of, (returned Mrs. Burton) it is no thanks to her that he is a Lord.

Pray Miss, (said the eldest, addressing Juliana) do you think cousin Betsy Mordant handsome? She is generally thought so, (answered our heroine.) Handsome! (cried Mrs. Burton) she is too conceited to be handsome; handsome is, as handsome does. Besides, all cousin Mordant's estate is settled upon his son, and his wife, though she was a Lord's daughter, had little or nothing, so that cousin Betsy will have no great fortune, and then what does her beauty signify? And yet how fine she dresses, (exclaimed Miss Peggy;) one

one would think she had money as plenty as dirt. Oh, there is no knowing people by their clothes, (cried Miss Burton;) or who would not think that Miss Reynolds, and the Miss Whites had great fortunes, and yet every body knows that their fathers can give them nothing at all. No, that's certain enough, (returned the eldest;) for if Mr. White could have given Miss Nancy two thousand pounds, she would have been married to Mr. Longman of the Hill. What is that to you, pray, (cried Mrs. Burton;) I beg you won't let your tongues run at such a rate; you should be thankful that your father can do better for you: though to say the truth it is no great thanks to him. If I had not married him when I did he would have been no better than his neighbours, though now very few of them can count guineas with him. I fancy not, indeed, (cried Miss Peggy;)

Peggy;) I fancy very few will pretend to it. That is nothing to you, (returned Mrs. Burton;) if you are likely to have a good fortune, you should try to behave well, and learn to speak French, and play on the music, that you may be fit to marry a gentleman, for if you ever marry any thing under a gentleman, your father will never give you a single farthing. Though my father was only a shopkeeper, yet you see I learned to behave myself, and so married as good a gentleman as the best of them. To be sure I had money in plenty, and plenty of money makes a gentleman at any time. Then, (said Miss Burton) if we was to marry a man that has plenty of money, my papa would not be angry though he were not a gentleman? No, (replied her mother) provided he has money enough to make him one. Well but now cousin Mordant has sent us a governess,

verness, (cried Miss Peggy) we shall learn to behave so as to marry a right gentleman, and that will be better, won't it mama? Yes to be sure, (answered Mrs. Burton;) but then you must mind her, and not run about like wild things as you do now. See how Hannah pokes her head, what gentleman will ever like her if she does so? Then turning suddenly to Juliana, she asked what wages she expected to receive?

Our poor heroine was too thoroughly disgusted by the foregoing conversation, as well as by the appearance of Mrs. Burton, and her daughters, to have continued an hour at the Grove, had she known where else to go; but the wide world at that moment presenting her with but one probable place of shelter, and she having resolved at all events to avoid that one, she was under a necessity of remaining in her present

present situation, however unpleasant, till one more eligible should present itself to her choice. She therefore answered, that if it was agreeable she would stay a few weeks in the family, before her salary was fixed, as by that means they would have an opportunity of judging, whether she was likely to answer the purpose for which they wished to receive her. This proposal appeared to please Mrs. Burton very much. She answered, that it would be quite agreeable; adding, and you will see how you like our way of living. Though there is no great danger of that, there is few families that live better in the whole neighbourhood. We are a good many of us, and as for our eating, it will make no manner of difference in the house; but cousin Mordant says, you must be treated in all respects like a gentlewoman, so I suppose you expect wine; however,

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we shall not quarrel for one glass after dinner, or so, and as for more, it only inflames the blood, and makes young women look old before their time. Juliana replied, that all such things were matters of great indifference to her, and that provided such a degree of consideration was given her in the family, as would enable her to be useful to the young ladies, it was all she desired.

Well, (cried Mrs. Burton) that is very prettily said; I dare say you will do very well; but I suppose you have had no dinner; our hour is exactly two. We don't follow the new fashion, we can pay every one their own, and so have a right to do as we please. I suppose they dine at seven or eight at cousin Mordant's, but that is nothing to us. It is not worth while to dirty the parlour again, so we'll go into the housekeeper's room as
we

we call it, for you must know, I keep no housekeeper, I like to see how things go myself; but it is all one, for I keep my pickles and sweetmeats there, just as if I was housekeeper. Come, we will have the cloth laid there, and you shall have some cold loin of veal in a moment; it was very good at dinner. Go Peggy, and bid the gardener send us a cucumber; I am afraid there is none of the dumpling left.

Juliana thanked the bountiful Lady for this profusion of kindness, but declined to accept her offered treat; saying, she would not choose any thing till tea time. Mrs. Burton then ordered her eldest daughter to show her up to the green plaid room, upon the second floor, which command was obeyed by all three, who ran up stairs, as if a reward had been offered to her who got to the top soonest. They were no sooner entered the apartment, which

which was large, neatly furnished, and very pleasant, than the senses of our poor heroine were perfectly confounded, by the torrent of words which poured at once upon her ear. The young ladies all began to speak at the same instant, upon different subjects, and endeavoured by the high key in which they pitched their voices to gain the ascendance over each other, and fix the attention of the unfortunate hearer. One asked a question, another directed her where she might place her things, and the third pointed out the fineness of the prospect, (as she termed it) to be seen from the window, and each by their earnest looks and gestures seemed to demand a particular answer to what she said; in which it being impossible to oblige them, Juliana returned back as soon as possible, rather chusing to be punished by

by attending to Mrs. Burton than to her three daughters at once.

Upon her return to the parlour she found Mr. Burton just come in from his morning ride. He was a handsome looking ruddy complexioned man, with something in his appearance which indicated that he had once been a man of the world, though now rusticated, and wholly careless about either his manners or person. This indeed was the real case, for he had so deeply involved a good estate by pursuing what are called the pleasures of the town, that he was obliged to look out for a rich wife, in order to put him into tolerable condition, and enable him to keep his family mansion. His present wife, who was the daughter of a rich tallow-chandler, happening to fall in his way, he was induced to exchange his gentility for her thousands. Since which, he had commenced

menced country Esquire, devoting his whole time to the diversions properly belonging to that character: not that he was supposed to have quite relinquished all his former habits; he still loved a game of whist; and the neighbouring farmers were not fond of exposing a fresh coloured wife or daughter too often to his sight. This gentleman, having heard from his valuable lady, the whole account of Juliana, during the time she was up stairs, addressed her upon entering the room, with much civility, and turning to his wife, said, he had no doubt but she would do very well, and thought they were much obliged to Mrs. Mordant for sending them so likely a young person.

A few days convinced Juliana, that the capacity of her pupils were, if possible, inferior to their manners; and that, had she every means of improvement

ment put into her hands, they would be exerted in vain. This, however, was by no means the case. Mrs. Burton chose to be present at all their lessons, in order, as she said, to be a judge how they came on. She would often interrupt them, frequently giving her opinion in direct opposition to that of the instructor; and supporting her, or her daughters, just as she thought them, what she called, in the right. She likewise insisted, that their needlework should not be neglected; and even brought some wristbands, belonging to a set of shifts, which they were then making for Mr. Burton, to our heroine; telling her, that it was very easy to talk and work at the same time, if people would but use themselves to it; that idleness was the mother of all mischief, and therefore she never allowed it in her house; that they had a whole dozen of shifts to make, and

things, which she could lower to their capacities, and giving them truer ideas of right and wrong, a matter about which they were almost totally ignorant.

Had ignorance, or even weakness of understanding, been the worst obstacles of their improvements, she would have entertained considerable hopes of rendering them in some degree amiable, and giving them a prospect of passing through life with ease and comfort to themselves, and those with whom they might be connected. By teaching them a variety of pleasing employments, in which, though they might never excel, or even rise to mediocrity, she might have enabled them to pass their time innocently and agreeably to themselves, if not usefully to others, and by that means have precluded those painful and pernicious qualities, which so generally infest weak minds; such as vanity, envy, excessive curio-

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sity,

as they were rather in a hurry to have them finished, she should be very glad of her assistance.

Notwithstanding the extreme difficulty and discouragement which our poor heroine had to encounter, she determined not to relinquish the task she had undertaken, while the smallest hope remained of rendering herself useful to her pupils. Their understandings, indeed, she had no hope of improving, but she still thought it was possible, in some degree, to correct their bad habits, and soften their dispositions, and tempers. In this hope, she endured their petulance and folly with the greatest patience, sweetness, and composure of mind. Her attention to them was unremitted, she condescended to hearken to their most absurd and childish discourses, and took every opportunity of correcting their mistakes, explaining the nature of those things,

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sity, and several others, which are almost constantly the accompaniments of folly, she might have hoped to render them inoffensive, which very few women of weak understandings can be said to be. But Juliana had far greater disadvantages to overcome before so desirable a change in the Miss Burtons could be effected. The entire neglect they had suffered, in point of early education, a circumstance of so much importance to every succeeding stage of life, and the miserable examples, both of conduct and manners, which they had been constantly accustomed to behold in their father's kitchen, (to which they had free access,) as well as from their parents and most of their acquaintance, had not only vulgarized their manners, but corrupted their dispositions. They had contracted almost every bad habit of which their age and situation rendered them capable; among
which

which was an absolute disregard of truth. Nothing they said, could with any certainty be depended upon; they were full of evasions and subterfuges; which, though too poor to deceive for a moment an understanding so clear and penetrating as that which Juliana possessed, continually obliged her to renew the disagreeable task of pursuing falsehood through all its various mazes, and detecting it in all the mean disguises of intended imposition. What rendered these labours peculiarly unpleasant was their inefficacy. No sooner had she traced one lie to its original source, whether vanity, envy, malice, or false shame, (the common motives from whence she found them to spring,) explained its nature, exposed its folly, and used every persuasive to engage the culprit in future, to avoid the commission of so disgraceful, so disgusting a crime; no sooner did she, in the

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tears and half extorted confession of the offender, flatter herself, that a dawn of rectitude was breaking in upon her mind, than the repetition of a fault, in every respect similar to that which she had just before taken such pains to reprove, would convince her, that either her arguments and explanations, (though clothed in the most simple terms that the language could afford,) were not comprehended, or that they were thrown away upon hearts too much corrupted, and tempers too insensible, to be affected by them.

Besides this grand fault, they had several inferior ones, which our heroine found it equally difficult to remove. They had not the smallest idea of order, regularity, or subordination. Their mother never had employed any means of inducing them to act in conformity to her directions, except those of scolding and beating. Of neither of these indeed

indeed she had been sparing; nor had they the most distant sense of any duty, or compliance due to her, further than the above mentioned expedients enforced their unwilling obedience. They were likewise strangers to the smallest degree of neatness, either in their persons or apartments, the latter of which generally exhibited a scene of dirt and confusion, and in the former they were flatteringly and uncomfortable; except when going out, or in expectation of company; upon which occasions their solicitude about appearance was troublesomely excessive, and their desire of finery insatiable, as it was tasteless and undistinguishing. It was their constant custom, whenever unexpected visitants dropped in, to quit the parlour the moment their names were announced, and running up a little back stairs which led to their apartments, hide themselves there, till

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their departure ; or if desirous of appearing, fall to dressing-in the utmost hurry and confusion, tossing one article of their clothing to one corner of the room, and a second to the other ; and a few moments before the guests were preparing to take leave, enter with evident marks about them of the employment which had occasioned their absence ; such as ill dressed hair, newly powdered, stiff aprons, lately unfolded, or fine coloured shoes, placed upon stockings, the dark shade of which but too plainly declared that they had not, like their showy neighbours, been put on for the present occasion.

All these bad habits their new governess endeavoured to correct. She obliged them to pay a regular attention to their dress, especially to the article of cleanliness, the part of all others which they had been most accustomed to neglect ; and likewise to keep their
apartments

apartments in perfect order; but in doing this, she was obliged to descend to offices little different from those usually expected from a superior domestic; such as regulating their drawers and wardrobes, selecting their linen, and assisting them both to dress and fold up such articles as they took off, when their clothing was changed. To all this, however, she submitted with cheerfulness, in the hope that a little time would render neatness and order first familiar to them, then agreeable, and at last necessary. But in this expectation she had hitherto been disappointed, for her pupils, so far from expressing any pleasure in the new plans she laid down, were with difficulty prevailed upon to pursue them, even with the assistance she afforded them; and if left at all to their own directions, if she absented herself from their chambers for only a single day, she had

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the mortification to see them return to their accustomed carelessness and confusion. Her attention, indeed, was so regular and unremitted, that she seldom gave them an opportunity of indulging their natural propensities, or those inveterate habits so difficult to be broken and laid aside. She perceived that reason and persuasion could do little, and had nothing to expect but from time and perseverance, which she hoped might effect something; much she despaired of effecting. She had however the satisfaction of perceiving that both Mr. and Mrs. Burton appeared greatly pleased with the endeavour she used for the benefit of their children. In a short time after her arrival they both declared that the girls improved very fast, and were quite another thing since she took the charge of them.

Our heroine was conscious that this alteration consisted merely in the difference

ference of their every day appearance, which was now perfectly clean and neat, a circumstance which Mrs. Burton, upon the whole, approved, though she made some complaints of the increased size of her washings, declaring that if the girls wore so many aprons and handkerchiefs, they must learn to get up their own fine things, for her head maid would never be able to do them all. To this her husband, who happened to be present, answered, that it would be very easy to have another ironing woman to assist; adding, that he thought the girls should be left to Miss Clayton (the name which Juliana had assumed upon her arrival at the Grove) in every thing, and that she was the best judge of what they ought to wear and do.

Mrs. Burton, among the rest of her amiable qualities, was strongly tinctured with that worst of all matrimo-

nial ones, jealousy. She had married for what she was pleased to call love, and thought that in return for the thirty thousand pounds, great tenderness, and an infinite stock of prudence, virtue, and good housewifery, which she had brought her husband, she had an undoubted right, not only to the common privileges of marriage, namely, those of bearing his name, living in his house, and managing his servants, but to the intire and absolute possession of his heart; as a proof of which, she expected intirely to monopolize all his civilities, gallantries, and attentions; in a word, that he should never look at any other woman. Mr. Burton, however, unfortunately beheld things in quite a different point of view. He had married his lady from motives of mere convenience; or rather, he was impelled by direful necessity, having, at the time he made her his wife, no choice

choice left between that, and passing the remainder of his life in a jail. Of the two he preferred the matrimonial bondage, resolving when he entered into it, to make himself amends for the unpleasant constraint he had laid upon his inclinations, by giving them, in future, leave to rove at large in the world of gallantry, and what he esteemed pleasure. In this respect, his ideas were unluckily in direct opposition to those entertained by his lady; he disliked her person and manners, despised her family, education, and understanding, and thought that by permitting her to assume his name, and the consequence which his connections and situation in life conferred upon her, he made her an ample return for the possession of what he used to term her paltry trash. In short, he thought almost any woman better worth looking at than his wife; and at the time he
made

made her such, resolved to indulge both his eyes and heart, in every pleasure which variety could afford, or fortune procure.

His lady however possessed, as he too quickly discovered, a most violent and ungovernable spirit; a spirit which was neither to be controlled by reason, or subdued by authority. She was fully sensible of the favour she had done her husband, (with whose situation, previous to their marriage, she was well acquainted,) in intrusting him with a fortune so necessary to repair the shattered state of his own, and seldom let an opportunity slip of expressing the proper sense she entertained of it, as well as of her own understanding and consequence.

The slightest neglect, or carelessness, on the part of her husband, was sure to raise a storm, which it was not in his power quickly to assuage: upon

such occasions, she would treat both him, and his family, (though of the latter, she was in reality extremely vain,) with the utmost contempt; reproach him with the situation he had once been reduced to; ask him who he might thank for his present ease and independence, and where he would have been before that time, if she had not had the generosity to marry him.

Mr. Burton was what is generally called a good-natured man; that is to say, he loved ease, and possessed very little resolution. What his wife could never have obtained from his gratitude, or a principle of justice, (he never having possessed the smallest degree of either,) she soon gained from his weakness and fear. They had not been married many months, before she became absolutely ruler in every respect, kept the purse, altered the family establishment according to her
own

own inclination, banished all her husband's old intimates, and suffered none to enter the house, but her own friends and favorites.

Though Mr. Burton's fortune had, within the few last years, been considerably enlarged by the death of a rich relation, who had unexpectedly made him his heir, the power of his lady was too firmly established to admit even of an attempt to shake it. Habit had thrown its strongest chains over his mind, and he was too indolent, and too much afraid of his wife, to consider that liberty, which he had once so highly esteemed, as among the number of attainable things.

But though Mr. Burton's family and affairs, as well as his own external appearance, and avowed conduct, were so intirely subjected to the influence of his lady, he by no means thought it necessary, in compliance
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with her high sense of matrimonial duties, to relinquish those little indulgences which he could enjoy without her knowledge, and therefore, in his opinion, without doing her any wrong. Nay, so far would inclination sometimes get the better of prudence, that he would venture to stay at the Black Lion, in the neighbouring town, in company with those persons, who we have before observed were banished from the Grove, till his condition became such, as ill qualified him to appear in the presence of his domestic sovereign, who upon such occasions never failed to exert her grand privilege; that of scolding him vehemently. Nor was the time present the only season when the offender suffered. The succeeding morning was sure to be devoted to the useful task of reproof; or to speak in terms better fitted to the occasion, to noise and reproaches, something

something nearly bordering upon downright abuse. These lectures were always given in the presence of the young ladies, or any other part of the family who happened accidentally to be in the room; and the former would frequently join their mama in little short sentences of reprimand, such as Oh, fie, papa! how can you go and spend mama's money at a nasty ale-house!

These impertinencies would sometimes rouse Mr. Burton into a rage; he would swear, stamp, and lift his arm in such a manner as obliged the girls to seek that security in flight, which they well knew was not to be depended upon from his affection or moderation. But his lady was a privileged speaker: to the worst language she could make use of, he never ventured to return a worse answer, than
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what was implied in a fullen look, or a well, well!

But these occasional devotions to Bacchus were not the worst of Mr. Burton's offences. In spite of his best precautions, she had two or three times discovered his amours; circumstances, which were not only attended by the most unbounded violence and resentment at the time of detection, but had ever since furnished her with a happy subject of reproach whenever she was out of humour. It had likewise had another bad effect upon her mind, namely, that of impressing upon it a constant uneasy suspicion. She never suffered her husband to take even a morning ride without exacting at his return, a minute account of where he had been, and with whom he had conversed; nor was she ever perfectly easy when he was out of her sight. She never let slip an occasion, in the course of common

mon conversation, of giving him a lecture upon the duty of conjugal fidelity, and to express the extreme detestation in which she held the breach of it; often declaring, in a manner the most earnest, that nothing should ever tempt her to commit a crime at once so vile and disgraceful; and that such actions were intirely beneath the character of a gentleman.

It may appear somewhat strange to the reader, that a woman so narrow in her sentiments, should choose to admit into her house a young person so uncommonly distinguished by personal attractions as was our heroine; but the truth is, that every woman under threescore, was equally the object of her jealousy, whether plain or beautiful. It was her custom to attribute all the improper actions committed by the men, to the forwardness of the women, among whom she believed the
former

former had very little choice; and she used to say that none of them would be in the smallest degree of danger, if their own flaunting airs did not bring it upon them. As for what she called baby faces, she never considered them as objects of admiration; for those she happened to meet with in low-life she despised or passed by without observation, and when any young woman of fashion was extolled for her beauty, she would generally remark, that fine feathers made fine birds; adding, with a look of superior knowledge and penetration, handsome is, as handsome does. In proportion to the contempt in which she held personal beauty, was the great admiration she expressed for what she was pleased to call goodness. This grand quality was, in her estimation, divided into two heads, modesty and notability; that is to say, she liked those women best, who could talk to
her

her longest upon the subject of cookery, (upon which, of all others, she was most fond of conversing,) and who appeared least to wish for the notice of her husband.

In the former of these articles poor Juliana was but moderately accomplished, being neither versed in the theory or practice of the culinary art. But what she was deficient in knowledge she made up in attention, never feeling the smallest inclination to interrupt the good lady during her long harangues upon this favorite topic. And as she possessed other qualifications, at present more suited to her purpose, she the more easily forgave the want of that which upon most occasions she esteemed indispensable. But in the latter particular it was not possible for any one to act more conformably to her wishes and ideas of propriety. The manners of Mr. Burton
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were by no means agreeable to our heroine; he was neither polite nor well informed; nor was there any apparent benevolence or goodness about him that might compensate for these deficiencies. There was in his character and manners, a mixture of meanness and pride, which though of a different kind from those of his wife, were equally displeasing. In short he was that most deplorable and stupid of all beings, a modern man of fashion in a state of rustication. When we add to this, the accounts which she constantly received from Mrs. Burton of his low amours, it will not be wonderful if, with a mind so virtuous and refined as her's, she should despise and avoid his conversation. As nominal master of the house in which she resided, it was necessary to behave towards him with common civility, but more she could not prevail upon herself to effect. He
often,

often, in the absence of his lady, would pay her many fine compliments, (as those with whom he usually conversed would have thought them) but they were wholly disregarded by her; she being too much accustomed to admiration, to consider that of any particular person as matter of exultation, and too little attentive to his discourse, to be either pleased or offended by it. Her time, indeed, was completely occupied in the care and instruction of her pupils, which allowed her little leisure for conversation with any other part of the family, and many successive days would pass, in which, except at meal times, she never at all mixed with it.

This conduct gained her the entire approbation and esteem of Mrs. Burton, who spoke of her to all her acquaintance in the highest terms of commendation; often declaring that Miss Clayton was one of the most prudent and

and best behaved young women with whom she had ever been acquainted; adding, she is none of your flaunting, giggling flirts, who are constantly gaping after the men, and who are the ruin of so many hopeful, well disposed young fellows, who, but for the lures and temptations they throw in their way, would marry and become good husbands and fathers. No, no, she is none such. She is modest and prudent, and by the time she has lived with me some years, has learned to send up a few made dishes, and to understand a little of pastry, pickling, and preserving, she will be one of the best qualified young people in the kingdom; and if she continues to behave as well as she has hitherto done, when the education of the girls is finished, I will keep her partly as my companion, partly as my own maid and housekeeper; for by that time I shall begin to want some-

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body about me, and have no doubt but she will quickly learn to fill that place, as well as that which she is now in.

Such were Mrs. Burton's favourable sentiments and designs, with regard to our heroine, both of which she regularly communicated to every visitor who came to her house; for talking was her delight, and whatever befel her, whether good or bad, whatever occupied her attention, whether her own affairs or those of her neighbours, they were immediately made the subject of discourse with the first acquaintance whose appearance afforded her an opportunity of making them such.

She would indeed sometimes repine a little that her daughters did not make a quicker progress in their knowledge of the French language, and could hardly be persuaded to believe that any thing in their education was of greater consequence, or more necessary

cessary to be attended to; saying that she knew all young ladies learned to talk French; that her cousin Mordant was at the expence of taking his whole family over to France, on purpose that his daughter should learn to talk it; and that had it not been for that, and playing on the harpsichord, they need not have had a governess at all; for that they could both write and read, having been taught the former by the coachman, and been instructed in the latter by herself. That as for temper and disposition, she could not think how any body could think of altering them, they being what heaven had thought fit to send; and that she esteemed the attempt little more likely to be successful, than his who strives to wash the blackamoer white; adding, that she supposed her girls tempers were not worse than those of other people. Upon the whole, how-

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ever,

ever, she was pretty well satisfied with our heroine's manner of treating them; she found them less noisy, pert and talkative; a change of which she greatly approved, hearers being always more agreeable to her than speakers.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITANT.

THE sweetness of Juliana's temper, her excellent understanding, and the unremitted attention which she constantly paid to the improvement of her children, together with the coldness and reserve with which she behaved towards Mr. Burton, in a short time after her introduction into the family, so far won upon the affections of Mrs. Burton, that she suffered her to proceed in the task of instruction pretty much, according to her own plans. The constant running of water will, in time, wear a channel in the hardest marble; and ignorant, stupid, and ill-disposed as her pupils were, she began to flatter herself that she had been able a little to correct some of

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their

their worst and most prevailing habits. But the task she had undertaken was most irksome. Constantly to be combating, or patiently listening to folly; never to hear the voice of reason, or behold a countenance illumined by understanding, was a state of real mortification; she could not look forward to its continuance, without the most painful sensations. Yet she saw no prospect of change. Nobody visited at the Grove but persons who in some degree resembled its mistress, and from such she could neither hope or expect assistance. Often did she reflect upon the happy days she had spent at Furze-Hill; days, the remembrance of which was endeared by the sad contrast she now experienced. Often would those scenes present themselves to her imagination, wherein elegance, information and affection united to render her happy; when all she said was received with

with the smile of kindness; all she did directed by the guidance of wisdom, and viewed through the favorable medium of partial friendship.

She would in idea convey herself to that sweet retreat of virtue and rational pleasure; she would behold Mrs. Maitland placed in her accustomed seat; her beloved Mary, with that smile of cheerfulness which usually adorned her animated countenance, relating to her some little circumstance which had occurred in the course of her morning stroll among the neighbouring cottages; some lively remark made upon the book she had last read, or in a fashionable visit she had lately made; while the eyes of her fond mother were directed towards her with looks of approving satisfaction; such looks as she was once happy enough to receive, with which she sighed, vain wish! to be again blessed. Mrs. Williams.

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Mrs.

Mrs. Clement likewise shared her kindest remembrance; nor was Henry, her once dear, acknowledged dear Henry, forgotten. But upon him she did not dare to suffer her thoughts to dwell. A pang too painful accompanied his idea, to permit her mind to rest upon it with tolerable composure; yet it would again and again present itself, changing its form a thousand times, and each change seeming to appear more amiable and engaging than the last situation in which it had placed him. But that which chiefly interested her heart, was his generous, his noble behaviour upon the discovery of her birth; a circumstance which never occurred to her remembrance, without affecting her in the strongest, the deepest manner. Ah! worthy, excellent Henry, (she would exclaim in an agony of grief and despair,) what have I done! what, alas, have I not lost,

lost, in rejecting thy generous affection !
 My revered patroness ! my beloved
 sister ! would ye, too, have received
 your unfortunate Juliana ? would ye
 have soothed her griefs, have forgiven
 the involuntary crime she has committed,
 and again have received her to your
 friendship and affection ? Yes, yes ! I
 know you would ! Are you not all be-
 nevolence, all nobleness ! You would
 have wiped away my tears, have hid
 my blushes in your bosoms, have shel-
 tered me from the unfeeling world.
 You would have loved me, and I
 should have been happy.

From these fond reveries she would
 suddenly awaken to a recollection of
 those humiliating circumstances which
 had deprived her of such pleasing
 prospects. Her mean birth, the in-
 famy of her parents, and the imposture
 she had been innocently made to prac-
 tise upon a family so worthy and re-
 spectable,

spectable, would all at once rush upon her mind, and overwhelm it with shame and anguish. No, (she would exclaim,) never will I add disgrace to the wrongs I have already done them; never will I give them cause to regret that they are generous and benevolent. I will patiently endure every difficulty of my situation, reflecting that the performance of my duty is now the only consolation left me.

These reflections generally concluded in a shower of tears, which fell at once to the remembrance of past happiness, the sense of present discomfort, and the apprehension of future evil. Such was her situation and state of mind; after having spent rather more than an hour in her own apartment, she was upon the point of descending to the parlour, when Mrs. Burton, (who never upon any occasion accustomed herself to use ceremony with any part
of

of her own family), opened her chamber door, begging that she would step down into the parlour. There is company just come in, (said she;) I wish people would let one know, for I hate to be surprized. Do you go down, Miss Clayton; I must slip on a cap and handkerchief. You are always so nice and exact, that I know you have no occasion to change your dress; so pray do go down, for Mr. Burton is just come into the house, and perhaps will go to the parlour before I am ready; and to tell you the plain truth, she is a fine flaunting madam, no better, I believe, than she should be, and I don't much like to trust them together. So do go down directly, and I will follow you in five minutes.

Juliana promised to do as she was requested; and immediately descending the stairs, approached the parlour.

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from.

from whence just as she was about to open the door, in a kind of hurry, issued Mr. Burton. His look was expressive of apprehension, but the moment he saw our heroine it vanished; and addressing her in his usual stile of rude gallantry, Oh my pretty little girl, (said he,) is it you? faith I thought it had been my wife; for when a fine woman is in the house, she watches me as closely as ever cat did mouse. Juliana could not help fearing that the good lady had considerable cause for her suspicions. She passed on, however, only answering, that Mrs. Burton was in her own chamber, and would be down presently. The Squire took his way towards the garden, and she entered the parlour, not impressed with sentiments very favourable to the lady she expected to find there. But what was her surprize, mortification, and almost terror,

terror, when seated upon a sofa at the opposite side of the room, she beheld Mrs. Martin.

Suddenly starting up, and approaching her with a countenance expressive of a degree of surprize at least equal to that which she herself felt, she exclaimed, Miss Maitland! is it possible! Good heavens! who could have expected to meet you at the Grove? Are any of the family from Mordant-Place here? For a moment Juliana was unable to speak; a crowd of painful ideas rushed at once into her mind. She beheld before her a mother, a base unworthy mother, to whose vices she owed her birth, and who, she had too much reason to believe, still retained their influence in her disposition, perhaps in her conduct. Mrs. Martin had again repeated her last question, whether any of the Mordants were with her, before she could recollect herself

herself sufficiently to answer. No, madam, (she at last hesitated, in a tremulous accent,) no; I have no longer any pretensions to the honor of belonging to their family. My name is no longer Maitland.

Alarm now took place of wonder in the features of Mrs. Martin. What do you mean? (cried she;) how came your name to be altered? sure Lady Maitland has not——Lady Maitland has, (replied Juliana,) by informing me who I really am, impowered me to do an act of justice, in relinquishing to those from whom I had so long usurped it, that fortune, to which I never had the slightest claim. And has she then really discovered who you are? (exclaimed Mrs. Martin;) has she had the cruelty to strip you of every thing? It was not she who deprived me of my unjustly obtained possessions, (replied our heroine;) it was my wish to resign them; and the act by

By which I did so, was wholly my own. The situation I am at present in, is of my own chusing; and all the favour I have to beg of you, madam, is, that you will not acknowledge any former acquaintance with me, either to Mr. Burton or any other person; or ever discover the place of my residence. With the former part of my request I presume you will, for your own sake, comply; and the latter I must intreat of you to grant for mine. I was recommended by Mrs. Mordant as a governess to Miss Burtons, in which capacity I am at present retained by the family. I have no doubt but the education I have received will enable me to pass through life with innocence and independance; and the possession of these I prefer, though attended by difficulty and inconvenience, to the most splendid condition, accompanied

accompanied by the depressing consciousness of guilt.

Imprudent, romantic girl! (exclaimed Mrs. Martin;) and are all my hopes of seeing thee great and happy come to this? Great (answered Juliana) according to the false and common acceptance of the word, I might certainly have been; but happiness and guilt are in their own natures incompatible. Idle stuff! (cried Mrs. Martin); the strange education given you by that unaccountable woman Mrs. Maitland, has certainly turned your head. It is to that you owe your ruin. Or, rather, (answered Juliana,) the strength and rectitude of mind by which I have been enabled to avoid it. This is, however, no longer a matter of debate; I have made my own choice, I am satisfied with it, and willing to run the hazard of every inconvenience it may occasion me. Suffer
me

me only to remain unknown; I have no other favour to request. Oh, you need not trouble yourself about that, (replied Mrs. Martin;) there is no danger of any body's molesting you. I make no doubt but the Maitlands are very glad to get you so readily off their hands, without discrediting their wonderful reputation for benevolence, generosity, and I know not what. Do you really think they would wish to receive a poor, friendless, destitute girl into their family? No, no, take my word for it, were they to meet you now, it would be with looks widely different from those you were accustomed to see when you were the supposed heiress of sixteen thousand pounds a year, and the means by which they hoped to provide for their whole family.

Our heroine was about to have replied, when the sound of Mrs. Burton descending

descending down the stairs prevented her. She had only time to request, that Mrs. Martin would at all events oblige her by preserving the secret of her birth; and remembering, that she was known to the family in which she now resided by the name of Clayton. She had scarce done speaking, when the lady of the mansion appeared; and after having paid her visitant the usual compliments of meeting, such as hoping she was very well; inquiring after the health of her husband and children; observing that the weather was extremely fine, and that she must have had a delightful walk; she asked, whether she had seen Mr. Burton; to which, with the utmost composure, and a countenance perfectly unaltered, she answered in the negative. Juliana was upon the point of expressing some surprize at her want of recollection, and reminding her of his

having

having come out of the parlour just as she was about to have entered it ; but reflecting, that such a discovery could only produce a momentary shame in the bosom of a woman so hardened and unprincipled as Mrs. Martin, and increase the uneasy suspicion of Mrs. Burton, she suffered the falsehood to pass undetected, though she could not but consider it as a proof of the continued indiscretion, if not criminal conduct, of her by whom it was asserted.

Had this, in the opinion of our heroine, been in any want of confirmation, her behaviour during the remainder of the evening would have afforded one sufficiently strong. At tea they were joined by Mr. Burton, whose notice and attention it was visibly her whole business to attract. She laughed at all his jests, (which were not sometimes of the most delicate kind);

kind) in a manner that shewed she both understood and enjoyed them; introduced many subjects of conversation which led directly to such as she knew he was fond of, and in every respect acted in a manner exactly opposite to that which is expressive either of good sense, politeness, or modesty. As for Mr. Burton, he did not dare to speak or act according to the dictates of his own inclinations, or what he esteemed gallantry, but both his looks and expressions plainly declared, that nothing but the presence of his wife restrained him from making every proper return to the encouraging advances he received. As for his lady, she appeared visibly uneasy; looked grave when Mrs. Martin and her husband laughed; talked much of the great levity and folly of the age; of the great danger men of respectable characters were in, from suffering them-

selves

selves to be ensnared by bad women ;
 and again and again protesting, that
 no one who in the smallest degree va-
 lued his character as a gentleman,
 would ever condescend to converse
 with or encourage such huffeys. She
 likewise harangued much in commenda-
 tion of prudence, discretion, and mo-
 desty ; observing, how improper it was
 for women to giggle, and flirt, and
 play monkey tricks ; and that every
 body knew what was their design in so
 doing ; but so far from obtaining their
 ends, men of sense, and gentlemen,
 who knew the world, despised them
 for it. She particularly observed, how
 unbecoming such behaviour was in
 married women, who ought to set an
 example for the young ones of gravity,
 discretion, and good housewifery ; and
 that many had better stay at home,
 and mind their own familiars, than
 come

come abroad to disturb those of other people.

These broad hints were received by Mrs. Martin with the most perfect indifference; nor did one change of countenance discover that her mind felt the least uneasy consciousness. But upon Mr. Burton they had a much stronger effect. He looked grave, declared himself entirely of his wife's opinion, and that he thought every man extremely happy, who was guarded by the advice and example of a sensible woman from falling into such dangerous errors. This well-timed compliment, and some others of the same kind, which he paid her, averted the storm which was gathering over his head, and put his lady again into tolerable humour; which having effected, and fearing that some unguarded look or expression might undo all again, he arose, looked through one
of

of the windows, and saying the evening was so fine that he should take a walk, put on his hat (which he generally did before he left the room) and withdrew.

The moment Mr. Burton was gone, Mrs. Martin thought proper to assume a behaviour quite different from that she had practised while he remained in the room. She inquired after his lady's ducks and chickens; asked if she had a good flight of pigeons that season; and whether partridges were plenty about them; and how many quarts of milk each of her cows gave upon an average. From cows they slid to eggs and cream, from cream to butter, from butter to gravies, and from gravies to all kinds of fricasees, ragouts, and made dishes. This was an inexhaustible subject, for there was nothing of which Mrs. Burton was so fond, eating excepted, as of the theory of cooking.

cooking. Mrs. Martin did not only indulge her friend, as she appeared determined to make her, in all her favourite topics of discourse, she called the most agreeable flattery to her assistance; declaring, that she knew nobody who was her equal in the management of her house, or the bringing up of her children: adding, that she had herself neglected both too much, but she was now convinced how very wrong she had been, and resolved in future to apply herself to the acquisition of such knowledge, as might enable her to discharge her domestic duties with propriety; in which she flattered herself her dear Mrs. Burton would not deny her her kind advice and assistance; and now that they were, by their late removal, at least twelve miles nearer to each other than they were used to be, she hoped they should see each other as often as possible, meet quite

quite in a friendly way, and be the best neighbours in the world.

During the whole time that Mrs. Martin was making her fine speeches, Juliana could scarce believe that it was not Lady Maitland who was speaking; just so she looked, when the designed attainment of any favourite object engaged her more than commonly to wish for the power of pleasing. Such were the words she made use of; her very accent was the same. Ah! how powerful is the force of education! (reflected she :) had that weak vain woman been brought up by a Mrs. Maitland, she might have been amiable and worthy.

As the evening drew on, Mr. Martin began to talk of departing, but so entirely was Mrs. Burton reconciled to her, so much was she delighted by the compliments she had paid to her understanding and good management, together with the wish she had expressed

to be guided by her advice and directions, that she entirely forgot the provocations she had lately received ; felt unwilling to lose such agreeable company, and begged that she would prolong her visit as much as possible ; observing, that this hot weather the later one walks the pleasanter it grows, and that as there was a fine moon, there was no danger of its growing dark.

To these kind invitations Mrs. Martin replied, that nothing could be more agreeable to her than the company she was then in. However, as no mention was made of supper, she arose about nine to take leave. Mrs. Burton attended her guest to the door, where a servant was in waiting to see her safe home : when just as they were parting, a clap of distant thunder, and a few large round drops of rain, which fell from a heavy cloud just hanging over them, warned them of an approaching storm.

storm. Mrs. Burton, in a strong and unusual fit of hospitality, declared, that she should by no means venture out till the shower was over ; adding, I dare say, it will not last long, and when it is passed, the hedges will be delightfully sweet, and it will be quite a pleasure to walk. Mrs. Martin did not express any wish to encounter the approaching storm ; she said, there was nothing in the world she dreaded so much as thunder, and would gladly accept her kind permission to take shelter under her hospitable roof. For some time Mrs. Burton sat in expectation of the evening clearing up, (during which she did not order clandles to be brought, though the darkness of the evening was such as to render it difficult for them to discern each other) but her expectations were disappointed ; the thunder became louder, and the rain fell in torrents ; at the

same time the clock striking ten, she found it would be absolutely necessary to offer the coach to carry her visitant home, or to ask her to stay all night. The latter she by no means wished, as notwithstanding the agreeable manner in which she had past a part of the afternoon, she did not desire that Mrs. Martin should spend more hours in the company of her husband than could decently be avoided; not that she was either handsome or young; but dress, paint, and levity of manner, made her appear a dangerous object to be too often exposed to his eyes. On the other hand, to suffer the horses to go three miles in such dreadful weather was not to be thought of. She was at no time fond of lending her coach, which, she used to say, Mr. Burton kept for her use, not to be made a stage of, for the convenience of the whole neighbourhood. In short, two evils

evils lay before her; it was necessary to make a choice; after a moment's hesitation, she resolved rather to risk the first mentioned danger, and therefore told her friend, that as the bad weather seemed to be set in for the night, she believed they must endeavour to provide a bed for her. Her visitor expressed much gratitude for this excessive kindness, and lights being ordered, the curtains were let down, and the family seated for the evening.

Mr. Burton did not join them till supper was upon the table, and his lady took good care that he should not remain exposed to temptation long after it was removed. The moment the clock struck eleven she rang for candles, telling her guest, that she was a friend to early hours, and never liked to be out of bed at twelve. Upon a servant appearing with lights, she told Mrs. Martin, that she hoped a

bed-fellow would not be disagreeable to her; for it being too late to get clean sheets properly aired, she had ordered another pillow to be laid on Miss Clayton's bed, which she assured her was as good a one as any in the house. Mrs. Martin said it would be perfectly agreeable to her to sleep with Miss Clayton; adding, that indeed her fear of thunder was so excessive, that she did not know whether she could have ventured to sleep alone.

Our heroine was too much accustomed to be treated sans ceremonie by Mrs. Burton, (who had never considered her in any higher point of view than as a servant who was admitted to eat in the parlour,) to wonder at a part of her bed being assigned to Mrs. Martin, without her being consulted, or even informed that it was intended. She would greatly have preferred the indulgence of her own thoughts to
the

the conversation of her present companion. But struggling with her feelings, which were of the most painful kind, she endeavoured to appear easy and chearful, obligingly offering her night clothes, and every convenience that could add to her accommodation and comfort. Mrs. Martin received these little marks of attention with a careless kind of haughtiness; speaking very little, and that little in a tone of affected superiority. She asked, however, several questions about the manner of her leaving Mordant-Place, frequently declaring that her folly had been beyond any thing she ever heard of; and whatever were her future difficulties in life, she had only herself to thank for them. She had just finished one of these comfortable speeches, when it came into her head to ask if she had seen Lord Belford after the discovery of her real birth was made? Upon

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which

which Juliana informed her of the manner in which he had employed Mrs. Mordant to offer her his hand with all those advantages which he had before tendered to her acceptance. Is it possible that he could be so generous? (exclaimed Mrs. Martin, her countenance suddenly changing from supercilious coldness to surprise;) and were you really weak and romantic enough to refuse so splendid a settlement? I had various reasons for refusing it, (replied Juliana;) but in my opinion one was sufficient, that of my being unable to esteem him. I wonder, (cried Mrs. Martin with a scornful air and voice,) that you did not say love! No doubt that, too, is necessary before you can think of matrimony. I really am out of all patience, (continued she, anger succeeding to contempt.) Then suddenly appearing to recollect herself, she paused a moment, and

and seemed lost in thought; after which, addressing our heroine with more complacency than she had hitherto deigned to regard her with, said she was really very sorry for her present situation, which she could consider in no better light than that of a common service. Were you governess in a family of rank and importance, (said she,) it is a very easy, eligible way of life, and one that no gentlewoman need be ashamed of. But to be a slave to the humours of such an ignorant, conceited, ill-bred creature as Mrs. Burton, and to be plagued with the horrid task of instructing those awkward, perverse idiots, her daughters, is absolutely intolerable.

Juliana replied, that she was by no means insensible to the extreme unpleasantness of her situation, nor were her hopes of being materially useful to Miss Burtons very strong; but that

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till

till she could be fortunate enough to hear of something more eligible, she thought it her duty to make the best of her present condition, and not to trouble her friends; if, indeed, (continued she, a tear starting in her eye,) I now possess any, with unnecessary complaints. Nay, (in a firmer voice,) it is my resolution never to apply to any one for assistance, while I retain the power of supporting myself by any justifiable means. Ah, my dear, (cried Mrs. Martin, shaking her head,) it is easy to talk; but take my word for it, by the time you have lived here eight or ten years, and begin to grow old in a state of friendless poverty, you will most heartily repent your present folly. You have here no opportunity of making yourself known to a single person who can be useful to you; none who visit Mrs. Burton are judges either of your merit or accomplishments;

ments; nor have you any prospect but that of spending your youth in a state of servile dependence, and being left to struggle with all the natural inconveniences of old age, unprovided with those comforts which can alone render it supportable. Poor Juliana was too sensible of the truths contained in this dismal representation; the tears flowed fast from her lovely eyes, and the sigh of anguish burst from her bosom. Mrs. Martin observing how deeply she was affected, began to soothe her distress, and revive her hopes. She said, that however she might have been disappointed in her expectations by the late unfortunate steps she had taken, she could never cease to love her, or to be most deeply interested in every thing that might affect her welfare and happiness. Her present situation, (she said,) though easy and independent, was not sufficiently affluent

to enable her in any considerable degree to contribute to her support, which otherwise she should be most happy to do; but in another way she flattered herself that she possessed the power of being essentially useful to her, a power which she assured her she would exert to the very uttermost. Rather more than a fortnight past, (continued she,) I was applied to by a family of the first consequence, who pass part of the summer at the distance of about thirty miles from this place, to enquire for a young person properly qualified to instruct their only daughter, a fine, sensible, sweet temper'd girl, of ten years old. As they are very particular both with respect to character and accomplishments, it is probable that they have not yet succeeded in meeting with one they approve: if this should fortunately be the case, it is a situation of all others that

that will best suit you, and one which I am sure you are capable of filling to the entire satisfaction of Mr. and Mrs. Greville, who are two of the most amiable, pleasing people in the world, and will never think they can sufficiently reward your care of their sweet little Emma; of whom, I have no doubt, you will be almost as fond as they are; for she is uncommonly sensible and engaging. I will write (continued Mrs. Martin,) the moment I get home; and if the appointment is not already filled up, secure it for you.

Our heroine thanked her in the warmest terms for her kind promise and intention, assuring her, that it should be her study to act in such a manner as to do no discredit to her recommendation; and that such a situation would be every thing she could hope or wish for. The idea of being so soon delivered from her present

sent state of slavery, and placed in one so pleasant and eligible; of exchanging meanness, ignorance and vulgarity, for generosity, information and politeness, was inexpressibly soothing to her mind; and had she not been disturbed by the apprehended uncertainty of obtaining so many blessings, she would almost have tasted perfect happiness. Hope and fear kept her sleepless during the greatest part of the night, and she was up the next morning at least an hour sooner than her usual time of rising. She was officious in assisting Mrs. Martin to dress, fearing that she should lose time, and not be ready for breakfast, which would of course delay that of her return home; by this means they were in the parlour near half an hour before the mistress of the house appeared.

Juliana, having requested the servant to bring in breakfast the moment his lady came down, went, as was her usual

usual custom, to the chamber where her pupils slept; for they never were able to dress themselves, and leave their apartment in such order as she required, without her assistance. This task being performed, she returned to the parlour, in hopes of seeing breakfast in a considerable degree of forwardness; when as she approached the door, she heard a stifled laugh, and Mrs. Martin exclaim, Fie, fie, Burton; I protest thou art the most impertinent creature I ever knew; go, go to your wife and tell her so. Upon our heroine's entrance, she saw that lady and Mr. Burton sitting upon the sofa, he in a reclining posture, his head being almost sunk behind her, and his arms carelessly thrown round her waist. She coloured upon seeing Juliana, and disengaging herself from him, exclaimed in an affected tone, Dear Miss Clayton, do come and help me; this rude creature

creature won't let me alone. Our heroine was about to have answered in a manner expressive of the disgust and contempt with which such impropriety of conduct inspired her, when the entrance of Mrs. Burton prevented her. The moment breakfast was over, the Squire quitted the room; and in less than half an hour Mrs. Martin followed his example, having first given her dear Mrs. Burton (as she now constantly entitled her,) the most pressing invitations to return her visit while the fine weather lasted; adding, that she hoped she would bring the sweet girls along with her, and favour her with staying at least two or three nights. The lady to whom these proposals were directed, appeared to feel no reluctance to the thought of accepting them; saying she could now leave home with more convenience than formerly, as she could entrust the
keys

keys to Miss Clayton, who, she had no doubt, would take good care of every thing during her absence. After these mutual civilities, the ladies parted, expressing the strongest desire of soon renewing the pleasure they had lately enjoyed in each other's company, Mrs. Martin repeatedly begging that the young ladies would remind their mamma of her promise.

Before she quitted the Grove, Mrs. Martin took an opportunity of whispering our heroine, that she would be sure to write to Mrs. Greville that very day; and that in about a week she might expect to hear from her. Juliana could only thank her by a look of gratitude for her kind promise, for the performance of which she waited with impatience.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE PROMISE PERFORMED.

A FULL week did our heroine wait in impatient expectation of hearing from Mrs. Martin. She was naturally inclined to hope, and to view every thing in the most cheerful and encouraging point of view, in which reason and judgment would admit of her beholding them. Her spirits were considerably enlivened by the comfortable prospect which now appeared to open upon her; she already began in idea to taste some of her former pleasures; she indulged a train of agreeable reflections, which, for some time past, had been strangers to her breast. One pleasing image succeeding another, incited her to a trial of her long neglected talent for poetry.

try. A fine myrtle-tree (which she had herself watered and tended ever since she came to the Grove, and of which she was considerably fonder than of any thing else in the house) stood upon a table before her. The Sonnet had of late become her favourite composition. She had one in her possession which she had at least perused a thousand times over. She resolved to address one to her verdant favourite, and after considering for a moment, took up the pen, and wrote the following lines.

S O N N E T,

TO A MYRTLE-TREE.

When summer decks the smiling plain,
Behold how fresh yon rose-bush blooms;
How rich a glow delights the eye,
How sweet a scent the air perfumes.
But ah! when frowning Winter comes,
When tempests load th' inclement skies,
How soon the gaudy flower declines,
It sickens, withers, falls, and dies!

But:

But 'gainst thy sober, modest charms
 The seasons point their rage in vain;
 Thou, constant thro' the varying year
 Thy leafy honours shalt retain.
 'Thus virtue every storm of fate can brave,
 Unmov'd meet death, and triumph in the grave.

Our heroine was in one of these agreeable reveries, when she was suddenly awakened from it by the entrance of her youngest pupil, who gave her a letter, which she said was come from Mrs. Martin's, and that a servant waited for an answer; adding, mamma wonders what Mrs. Martin can want with you, for she knows it is her hand. Juliana impatiently broke open the seal, and read the following words.

“ I am happy to inform my dear Juliana, that I have succeeded in my application to Mrs. Greville, from whom I this morning received a letter, in which she not only promises to
 take

take you into her family, provided she finds you deserving of the character I have given you, but proposes to dine with me to-morrow, and requests that you may give her the meeting, in order that she may be able to judge of your manners, about which she is very particular. You will, therefore, at all events, be with me by ten or eleven o'clock to-morrow morning, for I wish to have a little time with you before she arrives, as it will be in my power to give you some hints which may be useful to you. Let nothing prevent your coming: you need not use much ceremony with Mrs. Burton, as you will no longer stand in need of her protection. I shall expect you with impatience. A servant shall be at the Grove by nine o'clock, to conduct you to your sincere and affectionate

M. MARTIN."

Juliana

Juliana (without in the least degree attending to Miss Peggy, who expressed a great desire to know what were the contents of the letter she had delivered) immediately returned an answer to Mrs. Martin, assuring her, that nothing should prevent her attending her at the hour she had appointed. Having sealed her billet, she went herself down stairs, and gave it into the hands of the servant; after which she turned into the parlour, where Mrs. Burton and her daughters were sitting. So Miss, (exclaimed the former) I find you have had a letter from Mrs. Martin. Yes, madam, (replied Juliana) I have taken the liberty of engaging myself to spend to-morrow with her. To spend to-morrow with her! (cried Mrs. Burton, in a voice of astonishment) spend to-morrow with Mrs. Martin! Yes, madam, (answered our heroine) there is a lady to dine at her
house

house with whom I have particular business, and I must beg you will excuse my absence for one day. Business! (cried Mrs. Burton) what business can you have? I think your proper business is to mind your scholars; I am sure they come on very slowly. There is the Miss Whites, by the time their governess had been with them three months, could talk French as fast as English, and my girls can hardly say a word. But some people are so vastly fond of new acquaintance! I thought, by all the whispering that passed the morning Mrs. Martin left us, that something was going on: people think they can deceive people, but they are mistaken. As for Mrs. Martin, she is as meer a flaunting gossiping minx as any in the neighbourhood; and if I was to say she was no better than she should be, I believe nobody could accuse me of speaking what is not true.

Juliana

Juliana endeavoured to soften Mrs. Burton's displeasure by saying, that she was sorry her visit was disagreeable to her; and adding, that it would probably be the only one she should desire to make during her continuance at the Grove. This in some degree pacified her anger, though she was not in perfect good humour throughout the whole day.

By nine the following morning Mrs. Martin's servant arrived, and our heroine (having first helped the young ladies to dress, and assigned them little tasks for the employment of the day) set out upon her way to Criton, the name of a large village in which Mr. Martin lived. Upon her arrival, she was met by the mistress of the house, in whose countenance disappointment and chagrin were strongly depicted. My dear girl, said she, (taking Juliana's hand, and leading her into a handsome

some parlour) I am truly glad to see you, but I am so vexed, so disappointed! Do you know, that about ten minutes after John set out to fetch you here, I received a letter from my friend Mrs. Greville, in which, after thanking me in the most obliging manner for the pains I have taken to suit her with a governess for her daughter, she proceeds to inform me, that last night a young lady arrived at her house, who is so well recommended, and appears so every way what she could wish, that it was impossible for her to decline the offer of her abilities, which she has every reason to believe are of the very first rate. Nothing (continued Mrs. Martin) could be so unfortunate, for it may be a long time before I hear of any thing that will suit you so well, and really your present situation is quite dreadful.

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Juliana

Juliana was indeed disappointed. The thought of returning to the Grove, as a place of residence, was inexpressibly disagreeable, and almost insupportable. While she had entertained little or no hopes of a change, she had brought her mind into a gloomy kind of resignation, but the bright gleam which had lately darted in upon her, might be said to have rendered darkness visible. She had before strove to deceive herself, to believe that her situation was tolerable, as it gave her the power of affording instruction and improvement to persons so greatly in want of both, and of providing for her own necessities without incurring obligations. But since she had indulged her mind in dwelling upon scenes of elegance and comfort, every thing in her late habitation appeared doubly disgusting; and the idea of continuing there, perhaps for whole years, sunk
her

her spirits in so uncommon a degree, that she sat down upon a chair which Mrs. Martin had placed for her, unable to utter a word.

Having a little recovered herself, she thanked the kind mistress of the mansion for the trouble she had given herself about her. I am indeed unfortunate, (said she, unable to suppress a tear which stole down her soft cheek) I am very unfortunate! The thought of living at the Grove, of being reproached by unfeeling ignorance, because I cannot animate stupidity, and give ideas to idiotism, is unsupportable. I will risk every thing rather than submit to it. By this time Mrs. Mor-dant may have heard of something more eligible; I will immediately write, and — Ah, my dear Juliana, (cried Mrs. Martin) you will never know the world: deceived by the innocence and goodness of your own heart, you expect

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pect to meet with virtues which I fear exist no where else. I know Mrs. Mordant better than you do, and I would lay ten thousand to one, against her ever giving herself the trouble of answering your letter. Well, (replied Juliana) if that should be the case, I will not suffer that pride, to which I have not the smallest reasonable pretence, to stand between and rob me of that humble contentment, which I may, perhaps, be fortunate enough to attain. Perhaps, madam, (continued she hesitating) perhaps you may know some lady of worthy character, who wants an attendant upon her person. Good heavens! (exclaimed Mrs. Martin) can you seriously think of going to service? I can (answered Juliana;) I will no longer continue at the Grove, and what else can I do? There is yet another choice left you, (replied Mrs. Martin) you have yet one friend; one who is
both

both able and desirous to raise you above all the difficulties under which you now struggle, who will not only make you easy and independent, but rich, great, and happy. You are surprized; you doubt the truth of what I assert. I do not wonder at your amazement; such virtue, such attachment is indeed uncommon. But to keep you no longer in suspense, to put your good fortune beyond a possibility of doubt, behold this excellent, this generous friend, and learn from him the particulars of your happiness. So saying, she opened the door of an inner parlour, out of which, to our heroine's utter astonishment, came the Earl of Bedford.

His lordship approached our half-affrighted heroine, with the greatest respect; and taking one of her hands, Lovely Miss Maitland, (said he) how do I rejoice to see you? Why have you so long concealed yourself from one

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who knows no pleasure equal to that of serving you? Believe me, I can truly say, that since you quitted Mor-dant-Place, I have not enjoyed an easy moment. Why would you so exceedingly distress those who sincerely love you, and expose yourself to dangers and difficulties with which you were not born to struggle, and which they would rather die than suffer you to endure? If I have any such friends, Sir, (answered Juliana, somewhat recovered from her surprize) I am indeed obliged to them. The difficulties with which I have hitherto struggled, have been only such as are naturally to be expected in my proper rank of life. You are not ignorant, that I have given up all pretension to the name of Maitland, (continued she, a deep sigh struggling from the very bottom of her heart;) a right to it I never possessed; and I must intreat all those who knew me in a
fictitious

fictitious character, to forget both me
 and a circumstance which I cannot re-
 flect upon without confusion. Forget
 you! (exclaimed the Earl) rather tell
 me to forget my existence. The name
 you have lost was unworthy of your
 merits; one far more ancient and noble
 awaits, will be honoured by your ac-
 ceptance. Need I say, need I repeat,
 how dear you are to me? can I give
 you a stronger proof of my attach-
 ment, than by offering, in your present
 situation, to make you my wife? I will
 deceive you in nothing; as soon as
 your mother discovered the place of
 your concealment, she communicated
 the welcome intelligence to me. Three
 days since I arrived at this place, and
 the time since that has been wholly em-
 ployed in drawing up such writings,
 as will secure to you not merely inde-
 pendence, but affluence, large as your
 own benevolent heart can desire. These

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writings

writings want but the ceremony of signing to render them valid ; and you will beyond measure oblige me by condescending to suffer me to execute them: There is (continued he, softening his voice) but one act more necessary to complete my happiness, and I trust, insure your own. Exactly at twelve I have appointed the rector of the parish to attend us ; I have a special licence in readiness ; and this evening I hope to set out upon my return to Belford Abby, the richest and happiest man upon earth :

Ah, my dear Juliana, (exclaimed Mrs. Martin) how inexpressibly happy will you be ! in a moment to find yourself delivered from so many discomforts, from the wretched prospect of passing your youth in hardships, and your old age in neglected poverty ; in a moment, I say, to be delivered from a state so miserable, and placed in one
so

so every way enviable. It will certainly appear like enchantment, like a golden dream.

If I were to look for happiness in the situation you propose, madam, (replied our heroine) my expectation would indeed prove a dream. I am sensible of the unpleasantness of my present condition and prospects, but I will not exchange them for others still more gloomy, nor quit the uneven but safe paths of virtue, for the thorny and destructive ones of vice. To you, madam, (continued she) what I say may appear somewhat mysterious, but his lordship clearly comprehends its meaning. It is sufficient to you, that I should assign as a cause of my present absolute refusal of the seemingly splendid and honourable proposals now made me, that by accepting them, I should render myself more unhappy than I already am: but Lord Belford is con-

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scious

scious of a cause which would make it criminal; he well knows that were I to accept the offers he has now made me, I should not be his wife; that it is not in his power to make me such.

Lord Belford's confusion was visible in his countenance, as was that of Mrs. Martin in her's; she affected to laugh, was half in a passion, and half endeavoured to soothe and persuade Juliana into what she wished. Talked of romantic nonsense, of a permanent establishment, and the great danger of living in an unprotected state. Juliana was about to have replied, when Lord Belford, (approaching her with a mixture of respect and apprehension) said he but too well knew the unfortunate circumstance to which she alluded; adding, could I recall the past, everything should unite in my present proposal which honour, or the most scrupulous delicacy could require; but
 permit

permit me to observe, that the validity
 of the deeds I just now mentioned, de-
 pends upon nothing but their being
 signed by me; and that I am ready to
 execute them with any additions you
 shall condescend to point out. Let me
 likewise remind my adored Juliana,
 that there is no person in the world
 known by the name of Lady Belford;
 that nobody will ever dispute the title
 with her, nor will she injure any one
 by assuming it. Hold, Sir, (exclaimed
 our heroine;) were you unmarried,
 and thought proper to offer me your
 hand and fortune; poor, unknown,
 and unprotected as I am, it is likely
 that I should reject them; do not then
 suppose that any proposals you have
 now the power of making, can cost
 me even the hesitation of a moment.
 I perceive, madam, (continued she,
 addressing Mrs. Martin,) that the hopes
 with which you flattered me of pro-
 curing

curing a more comfortable situation than that I am now in, were entirely without foundation, and merely calculated to serve a present purpose of your own in drawing me hither. You have, I doubt not, more cause to regret your disappointment than that which proceeds from your regard to my supposed interest; so far as that regard, however mistaken in its object, has been your motive, I am obliged to your intentions. The honour of both demands that in future we should be strangers; and I beg leave to repeat my last and only request, which I trust will be observed by all who have the smallest remaining kindness for me, that both my name and place of abode may continue entirely unknown. So saying, with a conscious dignity of air and aspect; a dignity, the result neither of title, fortune, or splendor of external appearance,

ance,

ance, but of true, innate honour and rectitude, she quitted the room, leaving the poor disappointed Peer, and his worthy and still more disappointed assistant, to gaze upon each other in silent wonder; neither of them daring to stop, or endeavour to prevent her going.

She walked with a quick step till she got entirely out of the village; when slackening her pace, she moved slowly along the fields, revolving in her mind the events of the morning. Just as she came into the field adjoining a shrubbery which led directly to the house, she heard a gun go off, and in a few moments beheld the Squire approaching. Miss Clayton, (cried he,) who expected to see you this morning? I thought you were gone to dine with Mrs. Martin. I suppose she has affronted you, for I know she hates every handsome woman. Just as he had

had finished this gallant speech, and was proceeding to take hold of her hand, (a freedom he had often attempted, but had met with a constant repulse,) Mrs. Burton appeared at the end of the shrubbery. Upon Juliana's approach, she exclaimed with a look not very expressive of pleasure or kindness, Bless me, Miss Clayton! what returned already! I thought you were to have spent the whole day with your new friend. Our heroine replied, that the lady she went to meet having met with an accident which prevented her coming according to Mrs. Martin's expectation, she had come home to dinner, there being no other inducement to her staying at Criton. And pray where did you meet Mr. Burton? (asked his lady;) has he been at Criton too? Juliana answered that he had not joined her longer than five minutes; adding, that
 she

she supposed she had heard the report of his gun, which went off just before he came in fight. Well, (said Mrs. Burton, appearing pretty well satisfied,) I am glad you are come home; the girls have been so rude, there's no bearing them. I hope you won't want to go out again for a long time; for gadding about does young women no good; it only teaches them to flirt and gossip, and forget whose legs they stand upon. This speech, and a few more equally sage and elegant, brought them to the house, which our heroine entered with a heavy heart, and a sensation such as the poor debtor feels, when after the indulgence of a short furlough, he again returns to his gloomy prison.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXX.

NO PASSION SO VIOLENT AS JEALOUSY.

NOTHING could be more truly mortifying than every part of our heroine's situation. She had lost and given up all that was most dear to her upon earth : her present state was truly uncomfortable, and her future prospects obscure and discouraging. In this family it was impossible for her to remain ; there was no bearing to live in the midst of unconquerable conceit, and unimproveable ignorance. Yet, where should she go ? Who had she a right to trouble with her wants and misfortunes ? She would trouble no one ; she would endure even her present state, till something offered that might enable her to change it to advantage. In this resolution, it is probable, she would have continued till that desired something presented itself, had

had it not been for an unexpected circumstance, which suddenly obliged her to resolve upon quitting even the poor shelter, which fortune had afforded her. This circumstance was no other than the very great attention paid to her by the master of the house, who took every opportunity of being in her sight, and never let one slip, when his wife was absent, without saying a number of obliging things to her, not one of which he dared to utter while Mrs. Burton was present.

Our heroine had been too much accustomed to receive compliments from men, to be surprised at those paid her by Mr. Burton, and was some time before she observed that there was any thing particular in them, or that they were only made in the absence of his wife. They at length, however, became too expressive of more than common admiration to escape her notice.

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She became uneasy; and her eagerness to quit the Grove increased; when one morning, after a ride which he usually took every day, he entered the parlour, and presented a letter to Juliana, saying, he met with it at the post-office in the neighbouring town, to which he generally rode every post morning to inquire for those directed to himself. Juliana was surprised to see the superscription for Miss Clayton, a name she had assumed upon her arrival at the Grove, and with which not even Mrs. Mordant was acquainted; but, upon opening it, her surprise was changed into indignation, when she read these words:

“ Most beautiful of women, if you at all know yourself, you will not wonder that every man who sees, must admire you; but I do more, I love you. Would to heaven I could convince you of it, by making you my
wife;

wife; but, alas, I am tied to one who is exactly the reverse of you; who is every thing I hate. I know how disagreeable it must be to you, to live with such a vulgar piece of ignorance and folly; permit me to remove you from her. I will immediately make you independent, by settling three hundred pounds a year upon you; and this I will do before you leave the Grove, and trust to your gratitude for my reward. I desire no answer, but a smile; smile, and I am happy.

T. BURTON."

Juliana put up this curious billet with a blush of contempt and indignation. Mr. Burton, who had seated himself opposite to her while she was reading it, in vain watched for the smile which was to ensure his happiness; a stately frown, of ineffable disdain, was the only return he received for

for his generous proposal, with which he quitted the room apparently very little satisfied.

Our heroine now resolved, at all events, to quit a family in which she had received so gross an insult; and wherein, if she continued, it was probable she would subject herself to a repetition of it. She determined to take a lodging in the neighbouring town, from whence she would write to Mrs. Mordant, and inform her of the cause which obliged her to leave the Grove; and to beg her further advice and recommendation. In pursuance of this resolution, she told Mrs. Burton that the contents of the letter she had just received, would oblige her to quit her house immediately; adding, that she hoped she would soon be suited with another preceptor for the young ladies; and that, if she might take the liberty of advising, she would

would recommend rather an older governess than herself to their choice. Oh, as to that, (answered Mrs. Burton) there is no danger of not getting people enough to do every thing for one, while one can pay them for it. I warrant cousin Mordant knows enough more, who will be ready to jump at such an offer; so if you chuse it, you may go this afternoon, for I am going to send the coach to town, (meaning a small one, at the distance of a few miles from the Grove) to fetch a friend, who is to stay a few days with me, and if you chuse to go so soon, you may ride in it. Juliana replied, that she would embrace the opportunity; and, rising to leave the room, in order to put her clothes into travelling condition, the billet she had just received, and which in her confusion she had put on one side of her pocket, fell upon the floor, and Mrs. Burton, who possessed

possessed a more than competent share of that most vulgar of all qualities, common curiosity, picking it up, instantly opened it, saying, Now I shall see if it is a lover that occasions your leaving us so hastily; and casting her eye to the bottom, beheld the name and hand writing of her husband.

Poor Juliana was rendered both dumb and motionless by surprise and fright; she turned pale, trembled, and was ready to sink to the ground. The cheeks of Mrs. Burton, on the contrary, became deeply crimsoned, her eyes darted fury, and such was the excess of her passion, that, for some moments, she could not utter a single word. At length the loudness of her voice, and the volubility of her tongue, made ample amends for the short suspension of their powers; she loaded our heroine with the most opprobrious epithets, sparing neither her honour,
 or

or her delicacy, and concluded with bidding her get out of her house that very moment, adding that she need not stay to pack up her trumpery, as it should all be sent after her, bag and baggage. Juliana endeavoured to clear her innocence, but she was overborne by a torrent of abuse, and resolved to quit the house without resistance, and content herself with writing an account of the affair to Mrs. Burton, which she thought a duty due to her reputation.

Such was the extreme violence of Mrs. Burton, that it was with difficulty she gained permission to put on her cloak, gloves, and bonnet, which having done in the most hasty manner, the door was, by the orders of that lady, opened by a footman, and our heroine driven out as a creature unworthy of mixing with society.

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So much was she shocked and frightened by the scurrility and violence of Mrs. Burton, that for some minutes she had no desire but to escape from them, or fear but of encountering them again; till having reached the bottom of the lawn, she began to consider which of the paths before her, through the wood, were most likely to lead to the neighbouring town. This was no easy point to ascertain, as she knew not the direction in which it stood. She however fixed upon the broadest, and most beaten, hoping to meet some one who could afford her a certain direction. As she passed along, she frequently turned back to view, through the several openings, those picturesque scenes with which she had been so much delighted upon her approach to the Grove; but the idea of its inhabitants now mingled itself with every object, and though her eye saw that they were

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beautiful,

beautiful, they had no longer the power to please. Indeed, her state of mind was by no means favourable to the admission of pleasureable ideas. She had, from her earliest years, been accustomed to attendance and protection, to friendship and tenderness, and was suddenly deprived of them all. She was alone, wandering in a strange country, and going to a place where neither her name or person were known to a single creature. She trembled to think upon the insults to which she might be exposed, from the folly and cruelty of mankind, from such minds as Mr. and Mrs. Burton's. In short, her present state was comfortless and perilous. She looked back to former days of elegance and safety with regret, and forward to those of doubtful danger with anxiety and terror.

In this most uneasy situation of mind she stopped upon an eminence, to try
 Vol. IV. I if

if she could see any thing of the neighbouring town, when a little to her right she heard the distant trampling of horses, and in a few moments two horsemen of genteel appearance came in view. The first thought that occurred to the mind of our heroine, was instant flight; but recollecting that a director was absolutely necessary to her, and that she had a better right to expect civility from a gentleman, than from an inferior traveller, she stopped till they came near enough to perceive their features; when, to her no small disturbance, she saw that it was Mr. Burton and his servant.

She would have fled; but fear and resentment deprived her of motion, and she stood pale and trembling, till the Esquire observing who it was, leaped off his horse in an instant, and approaching her with what he esteemed extreme gallantry and politeness, ex-

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claimed,

claimed, Miss Clayton! Is it possible that I am so happy! Can it be on my account that you have left the Grove? Yes, Sir, (replied our heroine, fear giving way to anger,) it is indeed on your account that I have left it. I trust, Sir, nothing in my conduct afforded you cause to believe that the strange letter you gave me this morning could be acceptable; be assured it was far otherwise. It is, however, fallen into the hands of your Lady, who, enraged at my supposed crime, has suddenly dismissed me from her family.

Dismissed you from her family! (exclaimed Mr. Burton;) by heaven, but you shall be in the family, and at the head of the family, if it is agreeable to you! Permit me, loveliest of the lovely, to conduct you back to my house. It is mine, and I will make that insolent unfeeling woman know that it is so. If one of you must quit

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it,

it, by heaven it shall be she! Return to your house, Sir! (answered Juliana;) you may be assured that I never will, or to any other place where I am likely to see a man who has so cruelly insulted me. Insulted thee, my angel! (cried Mr. Burton,) what, with the offer of three hundred pounds a year! Come I will add another to it, and faith that is more than I ever intended to give to the finest woman upon earth. But those dear little eyes have taken such fast hold upon my heart, that I should hardly think my whole fortune too much to purchase thine. Could you join your hand to your fortune Sir, (replied our heroine,) I would reject them with disdain; let me beg therefore, that I may hear no more of a subject so disgusting. Disgusting! (repeated Mr. Burton,) it is the only subject, upon which I can either speak or think with patience. But come, you shall be humoured

humoured in every thing, and in return tell me where you are going? I am going to the next town, (answered Juliana,) and if you will be good enough to direct me the nearest way to it, I shall esteem it a favour. You are quite out of the way, (replied Mr. Burton,) and will not be able to get there to-day; but I know a house where you may be comfortably accommodated till a carriage can be procured to convey you there; I will have the pleasure of conducting you to it, and William shall fetch my coach to take you to town. By no means, (replied Juliana,) I am perfectly able to walk, and will only trouble you to tell me which is the nearest way. That I will do in a moment, (replied he;) this path will lead you, by at least half a mile, nearer than any other; but, as these parts are very full of thieves and robbers, I will, myself, see you safe to the

end of the wood. So saying he gave his horse to his servant with a significant nod, who immediately rode off with it. The Esquire then took hold of Juliana's hand, saying, Come, come, if you do not make a little haste, the evening will be coming on before you get to the end of your walk, which is longer than you are aware of.

Our heroine was alarmed by the ardor with which he spake, and still more by observing that the path into which he was about to hurry her, led directly to the middle of the wood, and was narrow and half overgrown. She suddenly plucked back her hand in a fright, saying she wanted no protection, and would rather keep in the public road, though she should walk half a mile further. What are you afraid of, (cried he;) by heaven you shall come which way I please, so no more words about it. So saying, he put one hand round

round her waist, and taking hold of her arm with the other, drew her forward with his whole force. She screamed aloud, and struggled to disengage herself from his grasp, but every effort in her power to make, would have been vain, had she not been fortunately relieved by the sudden appearance of a post-coach and four, attended by a valet, and two servants in rich liveries. Encouraged by the hope of succour, she redoubled her cries and resistance; which being heard by a Lady who was in the coach, she instantly ordered her attendants to follow the distressed person, (for he had forced her out of their sight,) and bring her back, be the consequence what it would.

The servants, who were armed, instantly obeyed, and in a few moments returned with the half-dead Julian; who, uncertain whether her deliverers

were more to be trusted than the wretch from whom they had rescued her, was begging in the most earnest manner that they would let her go. The Lady was by this time alighted from her carriage, and followed by a female attendant, approached the terrified Juliana. She was just upon the point of assuring her, that she was perfectly safe, and offering to render her any further service in her power, when their eyes meeting the words, Miss Maitland and Lady Frances Seward were pronounced with mutual ardor and astonishment.

Never was joy greater than that which our heroine experienced, when she found herself under the protection of a person she so much loved and revered. The sudden transport succeeding to terror and despair, was too much for her spirits to support, and she would have fallen to the ground had

had not the valet fortunately caught her in his arms. By the help of a smelling bottle she soon revived, and being helped into the coach, and placed by the side of her protectress, a shower of tears relieved her full heart, and gave passage to those words which were before choaked by contending emotions.

Lady Frances ordered her servants to drive to the Inn at which they had last stopped, saying she had no further business at the Grove; and as soon as Juliana's tears had enabled her to speak with tolerable composure, requested to know how she came in so shocking a situation. Our heroine in a few words gave her the account she desired; and then begged to know how she happened to be passing that way. Though surely, (added she,) heaven conducted you hither for my relief. Her Ladyship informed her that she

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had,

had, a few days before, received a visit from Mr. Maitland and his sister, from whom she first heard an account of the unpleasant change of circumstances she had lately experienced. They told me, (continued Lady Fances,) that in pursuance of your earnest request, the former had left you at Mor-dant-Place in order to obtain Mrs. Maitland's expressed consent to his union with you. This was granted as soon as asked, and in order to convince you how willing they were to receive you into their family, to remove every doubt, Miss Maitland, (so it seems I must now call her,) resolved to accompany him back, in order to have the pleasure of bringing you home to her mother, who longed to fold you to her maternal bosom; to wipe away your tears; and assure you, that her Juliana was dear to her as ever.

Their

Their disappointment upon finding you gone was inexpressible, and could only be equalled by their grief and vexation, when they found that no person belonging to the family, except Mrs. Mordant, knew whether; and that she absolutely refused to afford them any information; alledging as a reason for her silence, a promise she had made to you of concealing from them the place of your retreat. After vainly endeavouring to prevail upon her to discover it, it occurred to your Henry that I might possibly know something of you, upon which he wrote a few lines to his mother, merely to account for his and his sister's lengthened absence, and immediately set out for Clareville House.

Never, (continued Lady Frances,) did I behold anxiety more strongly expressed upon a human countenance, than it appeared upon that of Mr. Maitland.

land; nor did his amiable sister seem much less affected, when I told them that I had not before received the slightest intimation of your change of circumstances and situation. They expressed the most passionate desire of discovering where you were, intreating that I would if possible draw the particulars from Mrs. Mordant, who they hoped would not have the same objections to informing me, as it was not likely that she lay under any contrary restrictions. I did not want many intreaties to induce me to do every thing in my power to be useful to my beloved young friend. I readily promised, if possible, to find you out; and assured them that I should be truly happy to extend to one so dear to me, that assistance and protection which distressed innocence and virtue had at all times a natural right to demand. But I too strongly felt your motives for concealment

calment to promise more. Though earnestly pressed by both to let them know the moment I had discovered you, I would only engage to inform them of your safety, as soon as I should be fortunate enough to ascertain it, and as much more as I could prevail upon you to allow me to reveal.

How delicate, how good is my dear Lady Frances! (cried our heroine, kissing her hand,) how shall I ever deserve her kindness! You deserve every thing that can be done for you, (answered Lady Frances,) and your acceptance of my offered protection, will be laying me under a real obligation; for to whom are we so much obliged, as to those who contribute to our happiness; and I know of nothing that can so greatly increase mine, as the constant enjoyment of your society; in the hope of obtaining which, I lost not a moment in setting out for Mor-
dant

dant-Place, where I found no difficulty in getting a direction to the place of your supposed residence. That my arrival happened at a time so critically useful to you, I am most thankful, nor shall I ever intirely pardon Mrs. Mordant for having recommended you to a family wherein it was so little likely that such a mind as your's should find even a tolerable degree of contentment, exclusive of the danger of throwing a young and beautiful woman, into the power of a character so abandoned as that of Mr. Burton. Juliana endeavoured to excuse Mrs. Mordant, by observing, that the very bad character of Mr. Burton might not be known to her ; and that at the time of her recommending her to the Grove, she had told her, that it was the only thing she then knew of which was at all likely to suit her.

And

And why, my dear Juliana, (said Lady Frances,) did you not favor me with your confidence? Was it that you judged me incapable, or feared to find me unwilling to serve you? Ah, neither, (replied our heroine;) it was a doubt of the right I had to solicit your assistance, that prevented my doing it. I doubted whether a young, healthy, well educated woman, who certainly possessed the power of providing for her own subsistence, was a proper object upon which to bestow that charity which inability has a right to claim, or that generous patronage which superior merit or genius alone can deserve. I felt that it was my duty to employ the powers with which I was endued to render myself independent, and feared that should I accept your bounty, I might lose what was to me far more valuable, your esteem and affection.

Alas!

THE LADY JANE GREY, (reigned Lady
Jane Grey, you saw her the dangers
which attend the early part of life is
attendant. You would she have been
as that to have it without one
thing, which to have her where they
are to have a great time. There
is a great deal of something ex-
traordinary in the kind of in-
terestment, and it is what no man
can see it ever can perfect; why
she should be a prince, so unusual
a thing, with facilities as your-
self, and it is a matter the sweets
of life, and of confidence and
satisfaction. A meeting then from
the old world, and I have no
doubt to be at home at Farnham—
and I am sure, confirmed Ju-
dith, and the great subject;
and I am sure of more, dif-
ferent things, must not be the wife
of an husband: you must no longer
call

call him my Henry; that once hoped-for privilege must belong to some more fortunate woman. And why so? (replied Lady Frances;) why may not you be that fortunate woman? As for birth, it is of no importance to an untitled married woman, who must always rank according to that of her husband; and for fortune, I will take care that the want of it shall be no obstruction to your happiness. I have already said that your constant society would render me more happy than any other circumstance, but I am not so selfish as to prefer my own pleasure to your felicity. Oh, you are too kind, too generous! (exclaimed Juliana, the tears falling fast from her eyes;) permit me to live with you; to devote my whole life to the gratitude and affection I owe and feel!

Lady Frances, observing how much she was affected, kissed her soft blooming

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ing cheek with maternal tenderness, and telling her they would talk further upon the subject when they were arrived at Clareville, changed it to one less interesting.

The remainder of their journey was without any incidents, except such as must befall every traveller who eats and sleeps upon the road. By noon upon the second day they arrived at Clareville, with the situation and noble appearance of which our heroine was extremely delighted. Upon their entrance, her kind protectress welcomed her in the most affectionate manner; telling her, with a smile of tenderness, that till she was mistress of one equally eligible, she hoped she would consider that as her home.

CHAP-

CHAPTER XXXI.

A REVERSE OF FORTUNE.

THEY were scarce seated in the drawing room, when Sir Charles Hastings entered; he expressed the most lively pleasure upon the sight of our heroine, to whom his behaviour was, if possible, more respectful than it had formerly been; yet a latent hope seemed to beam in his eyes: he no longer avoided her as he had lately done at Mordant place, but attended her and his aunt in a walk which they took over part of the pleasure-grounds, and appeared solicitous to point out all their beauties, which were very numerous, and render himself as useful and agreeable to her as possible.

Upon their return to the house, having, invited by the pleasantness of the evening,

evening, made their walk unusually long, Mrs. Burne presented a letter to Lady Frances, informing her that the gentleman who brought it, came express from Belford Abbey; that he requested the honour of speaking a few words with her Ladyship, and desired she might be informed that his name was Seamore. Lady Frances immediately recollected that it was the name of the person who was present at her marriage; she grew pale, and the tremor of her hand nearly deprived her of power to open the letter, which she well knew was directed by Lord Belford; having at length broken the seal, she found these words.

“ I would begin this letter, most amiable and virtuous of women, with apologies for my past conduct towards you; but had I any to offer, (which, alas, is not the case) the short time which will probably be allowed me in
this

this world forbids the attempt. I have only strength to tell you, that you are my true and only wife, and to intreat, that you will afford me your personal forgiveness before I die. Mr. Seamore, who was a witness of our nuptials, will deliver this, and inform you of some particulars with which you may wish to be acquainted. But lose no time, if you wish to soothe the dying pangs of your penitent husband

BELFORD."

All pale and trembling she gave the letter to Sir Charles, who perused it with a countenance full of amazement. While he read it, which he did more than once, she recovered spirits enough to inform him of as much of her story as was necessary to explain its contents. His astonishment was excessive, and his resentment proportioned to the affection and esteem he bore his aunt. Would to heaven (said he) that I had sooner been made acquainted with events, in
which

which I ought to have been so deeply interested. Why would you suffer me to live upon terms of civility with one who has so much injured you? Had I known but half of what you have now told me, Belford should have met with a different reception at Marley. That I well knew, (replied Lady Frances) and therefore I concealed it from you; chusing rather to endure my wrongs in silence, than involve those who are dear to me in dangers and inconveniences. Since there is no remedy, (said Sir Charles) had you not better see this Mr. Seamore, and hear what he has to say? After a moment's hesitation, she answered, I will see and hear him, but not alone. I would have you and my Juliana witness to all that passes between us. She then gave the letter to our heroine, who had scarce looked over it when Mr. Seamore entered.

It

It will be needless to trouble the reader with a particular account of all that passed upon this occasion; suffice it to say, that he informed her ladyship, that the person who had visited her in France, and called herself the wife of Lord Belford, had in reality no legal claim to that title, having been deceived into a false marriage by his lordship, who never scrupled any means to attain a favourite point. That the letters which she returned unopened, contained a full account of this circumstance, her husband being for some time very desirous to convince her of the truth; but the natural fickleness of his temper, and a new object which about that time happened to attract his attention, determined him to let her remain in the error she had embraced, as it would continue to him the privileges of a bachelor; the loss of which he had before begun to regret.

gret. Mr. Seamore added, that nothing could be deeper than his friend's contrition for the offences of his past life, especially for those committed against her, which were what appeared to hang most heavy upon his mind; and that he feared, if she had not the goodness to comply with his request, he would absolutely expire in despair.

I will see him, (replied Lady Frances with emotion) let it occasion me what pain it may. He is my husband, my penitent husband! and must not endure a single pang which I have the power to prevent. So saying, she ordered the coach, with a fresh set of horses, to be got immediately ready. Sir Charles offered to attend her, but this she would by no means permit, knowing that he had several engagements upon his hands, which he must break, without being of any real use to her by so doing.

As

As she conceived it by no means proper to leave Juliana behind her at Clareville, while Sir Charles was there, she requested her to favour her with the support of friendship upon the trying occasion she was about to encounter; a request with which she was eager to comply, greatly fearing, lest the scene she was about to behold might too much affect the sensibility and delicate frame of her beloved patroness.

Upon their arrival at Belford Abbey, they were received by the domestics with the most profound respect, each striving to outvie the other in every mark of attentive duty. Lady Frances found her spirits too much hurried at her first entrance to be able immediately to see her once dear, inexpressibly dear Belford. A thousand past scenes recurred to her busy fancy, and she leaned upon the arm of our heroine almost ready to faint. The house-

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keeper, who appeared to be well informed and respectable, intreated that she would take some refreshment; and Juliana and her own woman joining in the request, she was prevailed upon to eat a bit of bread and swallow one glass of wine; after which, summoning all the resolution of which she was possessed, she ascended to the apartment in which her lord lay.

As Juliana did not wish to see or be seen by Lord Belford, Lady Frances was attended to his chamber only by Burne: and during her stay there, our heroine amused herself with viewing the pictures in a great gallery, which contained one of the most valuable and best chosen collections in the kingdom. Indeed the whole house, which was the largest and most magnificent she had ever seen, was a museum, being filled with rich, beautiful and uncommon things, and fitted up
and

and furnished in a manner uncommonly superb and elegant.

In rather more than an hour she was joined by Lady Frances, whose eyes and countenance expressed what her heart suffered. Being conducted to an elegant dressing room, and left alone, she turned to her young friend, and with a sigh exclaimed, Poor Belford cannot live many hours: thank heaven, he appears truly sensible of all his follies; and I sincerely believe, were he to recover, would in future act as becomes a creature born for immortality. This change of heart he will, I fear, have no opportunity of proving by action, but that Being who sees every thought and wish that passes there, will not reject penitence, or suffer sincere intention to be unrewarded. Here her tears choaked the utterance of her words, and she remained for some moments silent. Being a little

K 2 recovered,

recovered, she told Juliana, that Lord Belford had requested her to assume his name; and that she feared he was about to bequeath to her a considerable part of his fortune, a counsellor who lived in the neighbourhood being sent for in order to alter his will. However, (continued she) it will still be in my power to do justice to his relations, and I will not rob them of any part of what is so absolutely their right.

While they were thus conversing, the door suddenly opened, and Mrs. Burne, all out of breath, and half wild with rapture, burst into the room, followed by Lord Belford's housekeeper, who appeared almost as much terrified. Oh! madam, madam! (exclaimed Burne) I have made such a discovery! Your child, your little Isabella is alive. This, this is the very woman that nursed her.

Good

Good heavens! (exclaimed Lady Belford, for by that title we must now distinguish Lady Frances) can it be possible! what do you mean? I mean what I say, madam, (replied Burne) but Mrs. Le Clare here will tell you all. Le Clare, (cried Lady Belford) that was indeed the name of the person who nursed my infant. Nay, (continued she, looking at the housekeeper) I now perfectly recollect your face. Had I known, madam, that the child had been your ladyship's, (said Le Clare) I should never have committed the fault for which I fear you never can forgive me; but believing that it belonged to your servant, I thought I did it a great kindness, and at the same time made my own fortune; for I thought when she grew up, and I told her who she was, and what I had done, she would be willing to purchase my secrecy at any price. What did

K 3

you

you do, (cried Lady Belford) where is my child? I will tell your ladyship the whole truth (answered Le Clare.) A few days after you quitted France, a lady came to my house, and asked me if I could accommodate her during her lying-in. She demanded secrecy, which I faithfully promised, and we agreed upon terms. She came accordingly, and was delivered of a daughter; four days after whose birth she was wrapped up warm and taken home in a chair, leaving her child, which was remarkably large and strong, behind her. During her stay in my house, she several times repeated, that her child would be the greatest fortune in England; and once she said, it would have twenty thousand pounds a year. This raised my curiosity, and I used all the art I was mistress of to draw out of a gentlewoman who came two or three times every day to visit her, who she was,

was, and how her child came to be heir to so vast a fortune; for some time she would tell me nothing, but at last, with the assistance of very rich candle, of which I persuaded her to take several cups, I got out of her the whole secret. She told me, that her master was a rich old gentleman, who had married a fine young wife, and was very desirous of having children, for want of which he did not love her, but led her a very ill life; and that she had resolved to deceive him by pretending to be with child, and producing this infant, whose mother was her great friend, as her own.

The very night (continued Mrs. LeClare) upon which the lady was carried away, her child being deprived of the breast, fell into convulsions and died. Upon which, for the reasons I have mentioned to your ladyship, I resolved to substitute your's, which was

very little larger, (being you know a seven month's child) in its room. In order more securely to lay my future claim to a reward for what I then esteemed so great a service, I marked it under the left breast with gunpowder, in a circle with a dot in the middle.

Good God! (exclaimed Juliana, starting from her seat) what was the name of —— She could say no more, the flutter of her spirits being too great to admit of words. What was the name of the family (cried Lady Belford little less agitated) in which you placed my infant? She is (replied Le Clare) at present the reputed daughter and heiress of the late Sir George Maitland, and reckoned one of the greatest beauties——Before she could finish her sentence, our transported heroine was clasped in the arms of her happy mother.

My

My child! my Isabella! (exclaimed Lady Belford, pressing her to her bosom;) oh, how shall I be sufficiently thankful for so rich a blessing! My mother! my dear, dear mother! was all the answer she received to this tender ejaculation. The sudden tide of joy was too strong to be supported; her lovely, new-found daughter sunk breathless into her arms. A few moments, however, restored her to life and joy; she sunk at the feet of her fond parent, from whom she received a thousand tender blessings; and some minutes passed in a state of rapture which few have ever tasted, which few have sensibility to taste.

From this pleasing delirium they were roused by the stopping of a coach at the door, which Le Clare informed them was one of her Lord's that had been sent to fetch the gentleman who was to make his will; upon which

K 5

Lady

Lady Belford recollected that it was necessary to inform him of the discovery she had just made, and directed Le Clare to go to his chamber, and request that he would allow her to speak with him before the gentleman who just arrived was admitted to his presence. Her request was immediately granted, Le Clare saying her Lord found himself considerably better than he had been for two or three days past, which he entirely attributed to the ease of mind which her forgiveness and reconciliation had afforded him.

Before Lady Belford quitted the room, she tenderly kissed her daughter, saying, you will be prepared, my love, to see your father. I know it will distress you, but it will be necessary, and I shall be present to support you. I will do all and every thing you desire; (answered our heroine.) It is enough, (replied her fond mother;)

ther;) it probably will not be many minutes before you are summoned. So saying, she hastened to her Lord, leaving our heroine with her own woman and Le Clare, whom she ordered to remain where they were, as she might possibly have occasion to send for them.

Lady Belford had no sooner left the apartment, than our heroine asked Le Clare how she came to be in England, and in the service of Lord Belford; to which she answered, that being distressed in her circumstances, she was obliged to go to service; and having herself to an English family, she came over with them; which she was the more ready to do, as she knew a few years would bring her to age; when she hoped to be provided for. As for her living with Lord Belford, she said it was perfectly accidental, having been in several families of distinction

since her first coming over. The fair enquirer then proceeded to ask if she knew the name of the person in the room of whose child she was substituted, and in what manner she contrived to convey her into Sir George Maitland's family. Le Clare replied, that she understood that the name of the lady who lay in at her house was Henly; and that having received notice of the time on which the child would be wanted, she gave her a sleeping potion, and took it in the dead of the night, as she had been directed, through a garden gate, from whence she was conducted by Lady Maitland's woman, (the same who had so often visited the Lady at her house) to a chamber where her Lady lay, who had pretended to be very indifferent all day, and had persuaded Sir George to let her sleep alone; that soon after her arrival, Lady Maitland's woman and

Miss

Miss Henly made a noise in the room ; and upon Sir George's sending to know the cause, returned for answer that her Ladyship was very ill. Sir George immediately ordered a servant to go to the house of an eminent doctor who was engaged to attend her ; but before he could arrive, Lady Maitland groaned violently for a few minutes, after which Miss Henly ran to tell Sir George that he had a daughter, and stopped the doctor under pretence that her Ladyship was inclined to sleep, and had desired that no one should be admitted to her apartment that night.

As Le Clare finished these words, a servant appeared to order her and Burne to come immediately to Lord Belford's chamber ; and in less than a quarter of an hour he returned ; and with the profoundest respect, addressing her by the name of Lady Isabella, delivered
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a request from Lord and Lady Belford, that she would favour them with her presence for a few moments. Though our heroine had too much understanding to be dazzled by the glare of a title, yet one which implied her acknowledged descent from a noble family, which insured to her the advantages of fortune, the protection of friends, and the respect and attention of the world in which she was placed, could not fail to communicate to her heart the most pleasing sensation; but like the bright gleam which illumines an April morning, it was quickly clouded by the thoughts of the melancholy scene she was about to behold. As she approached the chamber, her heart beat with such increased strength and quickness, that it was with difficulty she breathed or moved; and she entered it pale, trembling, and unable to look upon the bed which held a
parent

parent so lately found, so quickly to be lost.

Lady Belford, observing her distress, advanced towards her ; and taking her hand with a gentle pressure, Come, my soul's treasure, (said she,) and receive the first, the last blessing of thy father. Then leading her to the side of the bed upon which he lay, Behold, my Lord, (she continued,) your lovely daughter ; you are no stranger to her virtues, and therefore——No, (interrupted the Earl ;) I know them all, and shudder to think how much I once sought to injure her. Can you forgive me? (continued he, faintly.) Will you receive the blessing of one so unworthy to be called your father? Our heroine was shocked and affected ; she knelt down by the bed, and taking the cold withered hand which he feebly stretched out, between her's, bowed her face upon it, unable to speak

speak a word. His ghastly emaciated figure, the idea of kneeling to him as a father who had so long pursued her as a lover, for some time operated upon her mind in so unpleasing a manner, as almost wholly to deprive her of that presence of mind which she usually possessed, and which, but for the supporting presence of her mother, would upon this occasion have entirely forsaken her.

The interview with her father was short, he being too fast verging towards the last moments of life to venture longer to delay the settlement of his affairs, which the discovery of his daughter had rendered absolutely necessary. She was scarce retired with her mother, before the counsellor who had been sent for, was desired to walk into his chamber, in order to finish that last of worldly business. It had been his request, before Lady Belford
and

and his daughter left him, that they would return to him the moment he had concluded this necessary affair, that he might enjoy the comfort of spending the few remaining hours of life in their society; but his physicians coming in immediately as it was finished, forbade the domestics to obey a command which could now be of no use to their Lord, and would give the ladies an unnecessary shock. He had so entirely exhausted his strength in giving directions for the disposal of his large fortune, that almost the moment his task was completed, he became insensible, and soon afterwards expired.

CHAP.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE RETURN.

THE forms and ceremonies usually attendant, and generally thought necessary, at the funeral of a man of quality, are so well known, and so constantly resembling each other, that we shall not suppose our reader so ignorant as not to be fully acquainted with them; and as, in our opinion, processions of every kind are among the most childish of all amusements, we shall entirely pass over that exhibited in honour of Lord Belford, only observing, that it was as pompous and solemn as such displays of human vanity usually are. Upon opening the will of the deceased, which was done in the presence of not only his widow and daughter, but of all his nearest rela-

relations, it was found that he had bequeathed Belford Abbey, and an estate of ten thousand pounds a year to the gentleman to whom his title descended; that he had left a large legacy to Lady Belford, and remembrances to several of his friends; and the remainder of every thing of which he died possessed to his daughter.

From this regulation Lady Isabella found herself mistress of a splendid fortune, considerably surpassing that which she had expected to possess as heiress to Sir George Maitland. The change she had experienced from obscurity, dependance and hopelessness, to rank, fortune, and all the advantages annexed to them, was so rapid, that both her fall and recovery appeared more like a delusion than reality. But one blessing she had attained which her heart hourly assured her was no deception; the delight with which

which she received the caresses of her fond mother, the difference she found between them and those of Lady Maitland, most pleasingly convinced her that she had indeed a parent.

Upon their return to Clareville, they found letters both from Mrs. Maitland, her son, and daughter, in which they united in requesting, that Lady Frances (as they still called Lady Belford) would inform them where their dear Juliana was, if she had been fortunate enough to discover her; and that she would use all the influence they knew she had over her, to persuade her to make them happy, by becoming, what they had so long esteemed her, one of their family.

When Lady Belford had perused these letters, which she did aloud, she looked at her daughter with a smile, saying, Well, my love, do you continue in the same sentiments in which you were
 • firmly fixed, or have these letters a
 little

little shaken your resolution? Our heroine replied with a blush of sensibility, that she would in every thing be guided by her directions. I believe (replied Lady Belford) you think yourself pretty secure of the part that I shall take upon this occasion. I am indeed delighted with the conduct of Mrs. Maitland and her family; it is worthy of them and of you; nor can I even wish you a happier settlement in life than such a husband, mother, and sister, promise you. Suppose we pay them a visit? will it not give you pleasure to see Furze Hill again? It will give me inexpressible pleasure (replied our heroine) to behold the commencement of a lasting friendship between your ladyship and Mrs. Maitland; I am certain that nothing is wanting to form it but a knowledge of each other. My friendship for Mrs. Maitland (answered Lady Belford) is already formed, formed by
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the warmest gratitude which I feel for the care and tenderness she hath shewed to my dear Isabella. It is as much owing to her excellent example and instructions, as to the bounty of nature, that I see you what you are, which is both in manners and disposition every thing I could wish. How unhappy should I have been, had I found you vulgar, untaught, and ignorant; or still more, had you been affected, trifling, and selfish, as the young people of this age too generally are. Notwithstanding the strength of your understanding, I should probably have found you a mixture of all these unpleasing qualities, had Lady Maitland been the superintendant of your education. How thankful then ought I to be to your more than mother, who has preserved you free from those follies which rob youth of its charms, and render age despicable! When I give her

her a right to call you daughter, I shall but discharge a part of my debt; the rest you, my love, must pay in that character.

A tear of pleasure glittered in the bright eyes of Isabella, (for so we must now accustom ourselves to call her) while she thanked her mother for the kind attention she paid to her happiness; and acknowledged, that it could only be completed by her union with the family she had so long considered, and had every reason to love as her own. But what (cried Lady Belford) shall we do with poor Sir Charles? We must not take him with us. The few hours in which he indulged a gleam of hope, have, I can plainly perceive, revived that passion which despair had begun to subdue. Though the change in your circumstances has again deprived him of all expectation, he must not behold you given to another; indeed,

deed, I fear it would be more than he could bear. I have several times heard my dear mother say, (replied our heroine) that it was not my person which made Sir Charles Hastings my lover. No! (answered Lady Belford) I have heard him say, that he had seen other women as beautiful as you, but none whose understanding, manners, sentiments, and disposition, so exactly coincided with his ideas of female excellence. Then let him come with us and see Miss Maitland, (cried Isabella;) if my manners or disposition have any charms for him, her's must be at least equally pleasing. Have they not been formed by the same excellent example? I can with truth aver, that my dear Mary is one of the most amiable girls upon earth; and I cannot persuade myself, that a man of his turn of mind could behold her with indifference. My only fear is, that she would think
some

some part of his conduct too blameable to merit her confidence.

Whatever errors my nephew may have been led into, (answered her ladyship) they are all renounced. From the moment he formed the most distant hope of engaging the affections of an amiable and virtuous woman, all others became disgustful to his heart. The person to whom you allude is amply provided for, but all intercourse between them is at an end for ever; and I will venture to say, that every other part of his character will abide the strictest inquiry, and satisfy the most scrupulous delicacy.

As she spoke these words, Sir Charles (who had been paying a visit in the neighbourhood when they arrived) entered the room wherein they were sitting. He congratulated them upon the interesting discovery they had made since he last saw them, with an air of

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forced

forced satisfaction, which it was easy to perceive only veiled a discontented heart. He scarce ventured to look at his cousin, and his whole behaviour was constrained and unnatural: Lady Belford having thanked him for the congratulatory compliment he had paid her, told him she was going a journey, and wanted an escort: adding, now I am sure you cannot help offering to attend me. Sir Charles answered, that had she laid her commands upon him a week before, he would have done it with pleasure, but that he had resolved upon making a trip to the Continent before the commencement of winter; and had engaged himself to accompany a party who left England at furthest in five days. If you continue in that resolution (replied his aunt) we will release you in three: but I have set my heart upon your going with us, and Isabella makes it her particular request.

I can

I can refuse nothing (replied Sir Charles, his countenance brightening with pleasure) to persons so dear to me: But where are you going? To Furze Hill, (answered her ladyship;) I cannot be happy till I have thanked Mrs. Maitland for the kindness my dear Isabella has received from her. Sir Charles turned pale. I fear (said he) it will not be in my power to attend you. My engagement—Nay (replied Lady Belford) you have given us an implied promise, which you know, in the eye of honour, is as sacred as an absolute one; so that you must go, whether it be convenient to you or not, unless we are pleased to release you from it, which I feel not the smallest inclination to do. Come, Isabella, (continued she) have you no persuasives to use upon this occasion? If it is not very disagreeable to Sir Charles, (answered our heroine) I greatly wish he would fa-

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your

your us with his company. You have indeed used a persuasive, my lovely cousin, (answered the baronet;) I cannot resist the pleasure of gratifying a wish expressed by you, be the pain to myself ever so severe. I hope (replied our heroine) that an introduction to one of the most worthy and amiable families upon earth will, to one so capable of admiring their virtues, be rather attended with satisfaction than pain. Perhaps, (answered Sir Charles) a consciousness of that superior excellence may occasion the uneasiness I feel: but at all events I will certainly attend you.

Suppose we set out to-morrow morning, (said Lady Belford, after the pause of a moment :) I think my Isabella should lose no time before she acknowledges the obligations she is under; and I am impatient to join my thanks to her's. A smile of satisfaction was
the

the answer made by our heroine, which was perfectly understood by her mother; and Sir Charles saying, he wished to go as soon as possible on account of his intended tour, it was resolved to set out early the following morning, and orders were given accordingly.

Never had our heroine felt so impatient for the arrival of promised pleasure as at this time. The proofs she had received of the sincerity and affection of the friends she was about to visit had rendered them, if possible, dearer to her than ever. To return to them when they expected to receive her poor and friendless, to return rich, noble, and possessed of power to confer greater advantages upon them than they had ever expected to receive from her, was a degree of happiness almost exceeding any she had experienced. Sorrow and anxiety had more than once made her nights sleepless, but this

was the first that was rendered so by joy. She was ready a considerable time before the hour appointed for setting out in the morning, and her impatience made every necessary delay upon the road appear intolerably tedious. As they approached the well known scene of so many happy years, she would have given wings to the vehicle in which they rode; which, though drawn by four fine hunters, appeared to move too slow; and when they came in sight of the house, pleasure danced in her eyes, and her whole countenance expressed the most delightful expectation.

At length the coach drew up to the door, which being opened by a footman who was well known to our heroine, (for all Mrs. Maitland's domestics were growing old in her service) the inquiry was made, whether his lady was at home; and being answered in the affirmative, Sir Charles desired him

him to let her know, that Lady Frances Seward requested the favour of being admitted. The servant returned with his lady's request that she would walk in. Sir Charles then assisted Lady Belford in getting out of the coach, and was performing the same office of politeness by our heroine, when the man, casting his eyes upon her, instantly disappeared. As they entered the hall, they heard Mary's voice from the drawing-room, exclaiming in an accent of joyful surprise, Is it possible! are you sure it is she? These words were scarce uttered before she appeared, and flying to our heroine in an extacy, which for the moment superseded every thought of ceremony: My Juliana, (said she, throwing her arms fondly round her) My dear, dear cousin! welcome once more! Where have you been so long? Isabella returned her embrace, while a tear^d of pleasure

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trembled in her eye. She was about to speak, when the sight of Mrs. Maitland drew her attention from every other object.

Their meeting was the most tender; maternal and filial love could not be expressed with more warmth and gratefulness, nor could any observing stranger have suspected, that they were not really mother and daughter. During the first excess of pleasure and affection which possessed the bosom of each individual in this little group, Lady Belford remained neglected, but she felt neither pain or resentment upon that account; on the contrary, the reception her daughter met with from friends uninfluenced by any motive but pure affection, afforded her the most unmixed satisfaction. She was not, however, long left in the situation of a mere spectator. Mrs. Maitland approached her with the most respectful politeness, and

and thanked her for the honour her presence conferred upon her, as well as for being the means of restoring to her and her family one so very dear to them, upon whose happiness so much of their own depended. She then obligingly welcomed Sir Charles, and they all walked into the drawing room, where Mrs. Clement and Mrs. Williams were sitting, both of whom saluted our heroine in the kindest manner, expressing the sincerest joy at her return. We shall now, said the former, be ourselves again; since you left us, Miss Maitland has been more than half melancholy; scarce a day has passed, in which she has not sighed out, I wish Juliana would come home! What can detain her so long? But do not suppose (said Mrs. Maitland smiling) that Mary was the only one distressed by your absence: if it made her less happy, the latter part of it has ren-

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dered another in my family completely wretched.

I trust (said Lady Belford) her return will be a means of increasing the happiness of all who love her: at least, the want of fortune shall not prevent it. Those generous friends, who are willing to receive her into their family, while they believe her deprived of that and every other circumstance which can flatter vanity or ambition, will not, I hope, reject her, when she comes possessed of them all. In a word, they who so tenderly loved Juliana Maitland, will not think her less worthy of their affection, when become Lady Isabella Villars. By that name, which is her true one, permit me to present her to you; and at the same time to thank you, with a heart truly and warmly grateful, for the kindness, the more than maternal kindness, with which you have treated my child.

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The reader will easily conceive the pleasurable surprize into which these words threw Mrs. Maitland and her family. They were followed by a full relation of the circumstances already known to the reader, which Lady Belford concluded by again expressing the warm sense she felt of the unreturnable obligations her daughter and herself were under. Mrs. Maitland tenderly embraced Isabella, and congratulated her upon the happy change of situation she had lately experienced; particularly upon the discovery of her real mother, which, to a disposition such as her's, she knew would be matter of greater exultation of mind than either the acquisition of title or fortune. Mrs. Maitland's congratulations were followed by those of Mrs. Clement and Mrs. Williams; and Mary, embracing her with the same sisterly fondness she had done before, said with a

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countenance expressive of the sincerest pleasure, I cannot love you more, my dear Lady Isabella, than I did an hour ago, but I shall, during the rest of my life, be better friends with fortune for having, once at least, bestowed her favours so judiciously.

Notwithstanding the delight with which Isabella received these kind proofs of affection from those she so much loved, she felt that her happiness was incomplete, that one friend was absent whose presence was necessary to render it perfect. She wished to enquire where he was, but something not easily to be explained forbade her. In this state of mind she was, when Mary looking through the window, cried, Yonder comes my brother, a very model of lover-like melancholy. Then you are a judge of the symptoms by which that passion may be known? (said Sir Charles.) Not from experience,

experience, (replied Mary, with an unaffected smile,) but I have read pastorals, and seen pictures, and have taken my ideas from them, which being exactly verified in my brother, makes me think the better of his sincerity, and my own apprehension. But (continued she, rising,) I must meet Henry, and tell him that Lady Isabella Villars is here, and that she is full as handsome, accomplished, and amiable as his Juliana. See, he has thrown himself upon the seat under the great Acáthea, where he will remain for an hour, at least, if his reverie be not interrupted. Shall I have the pleasure of attending you, (said Sir Charles,) and joining my testimony in favour of Lady Isabella's attractions? You will do both me and my brother a favour, (answered Mary,) but you must not give him the slightest intimation of who it really is to whom we wish to introduce

introduce him ; there is nothing I love so much as pleasant surprizes. So saying, she quitted the room, followed by Sir Charles.

In about half an hour they returned to inform their expecting friends that they could by no means prevail upon Henry to join the supposed party in the drawing-room ; that he was quite cold and indifferent about the charms of Lady Isabella Villars, though they had described them in the most glowing colours ; saying, that were she a thousand times more beautiful and accomplished than they represented her, he should, in his present state of mind, have no pleasure in her society ; and that he had requested Sir Charles to excuse his coming in till she was gone, when he would gladly wait upon him ; adding, you too well know the excellencies of my Juliana, to wonder that the fear of losing her should render

der me thus unhappy. And have you really been cruel enough to leave him in ignorance of the good news you had it in your power to communicate? (said Mrs. Maitland.) Really, (replied Mary, smiling,) I thought such happiness as he will shortly be possessed of could not be purchased too dear; and that if it can admit of increase, it will receive it from the surprize he will just now experience; for I told him we should have nobody in half an hour but those who, notwithstanding his melancholy mood, he could have no objection to seeing; and he promised to join us in that time. I believe, continued she, he was half displeased with my more than usual gaiety; for he told me gravely, that he was glad to see the salutary effects Lady Isabella's arrival had had upon my spirits. I think, (said Mrs. Maitland,) you trifled too much with his sensibility; I wish

you had brought him in with you. Isabella's eyes plainly discovered that she was entirely of the same opinion ; which Mary observing, proposed to send a servant with a request from his mother that he would immediately join them ; adding, I know that will bring him directly, be his reluctance ever so strong. This was assented to, and in a few minutes he appeared.

The surprize and rapture with which he beheld the unexpected sight of his Juliana, may be more easily conceived than expressed : again and again he thanked Lady Belford for restoring her to him, and tenderly reproached her for having, by flying from them, occasioned so much pain to those who most loved her. His transport, however, was somewhat abated when Lady Belford informed him of the circumstances she had already related to his mother, and he found that our heroine had now new duties, connections

tions and attachments. True love, though it never despairs, is full of doubts and apprehensions. Henry well knew the warm affection Isabella had conceived for Lady Belford, before she suspected the tender relationship which subsisted between them; he had no doubt but that discovery must have greatly increased her influence, and he feared it would all be used in favour of Sir Charles Hastings. He thought Sir Charles looked more cheerful than usual; he read hope in his eye. If she had not consented to receive him as a lover, why did she suffer him to attend her? Yet it was improbable that Lady Belford should consent to her coming to Furze-Hill, if she wished to break the engagement which she knew subsisted between them. But perhaps this was insisted upon by Isabella; though inconstant, she might not be quite lost to gratitude and friendship. These reflections,

flections, and many others equally tormenting, passed in the mind of Henry, while Lady Belford was reciting her story; but the moment she had concluded it, all his apprehensions were removed, and the most unmixed and boundless joy took possession of his bosom; when turning to Mrs. Maitland, she added, It is to you, madam, next to heaven, that I am indebted for the happiness of finding my child *every thing* my fondest wishes could form. Nature has made her mine, but she is your's by every tie that can bind a sensible and grateful heart; as such receive her for your own. I know the merits of the person on whom I bestow my treasure, (continued she, turning to Henry, who had advanced towards her, doubtful rapture suspended in his eyes;) I know he will esteem her such, and therefore cheerfully ratify, by my entire consent and:

and approbation, the engagement her affections have entered into.

Scenes of excessive rapture are seldom pleasant, when attempted to be described; words are poor, when unsupported by those expressions of accent, countenance and gesture, by which genuine feeling is denoted. Let it at present suffice to say, that Henry felt all love and gratitude can excite, and that he expressed the emotions of his soul in the most lively and graceful manner; that every one partook in his happiness, even Sir Charles, congratulating him with a steady voice, though not with a countenance wholly free from embarrassment.

The reader who has taste and sensibility, will easily imagine in what manner the evening was passed; every one appeared pleased, and desirous of pleasing; Isabella was the most silent of the party, but her looks testified that her
heart

heart was the seat of peace, as it was known to be of virtue: Mary was in the highest spirits, her natural gaiety, which always exceeded that of her fair friend, being increased by the approaching happiness of her favourite brother, and one she had so long loved as a sister: Henry, who likewise possessed a more than common share of cheerfulness, contributed much to the entertainment of the party, exhibiting at the bottom of his mother's table those social and agreeable qualities which were shortly to enliven his own. Even Sir Charles was gay; he seemed to have forgotten that he was a lover, or a man of fashion, and to have assumed the character which nature had stamped upon him, that of openness, honour and sense.

A few minutes before they were summoned to supper, a card was delivered to Mrs. Maitland, which was
brought

brought by one of Sir George's footmen, in which he respectfully enquired after her health, informed her that he was arrived at Woodburn with a few friends, among whom was Mrs. Mor-dant and her family, who intended themselves the honour of calling upon her the next morning. Mrs. Maitland returned the proper answer, namely, that she should be at home, and glad to see them. I suppose (said Mary, as soon as they were seated at table,) George is bringing down Miss Mor-dant to take a view of Woodburn, previous to her becoming mistress of it. I wonder whether Lady Maitland is of the party? I wish I had made the enquiry, (said Mrs. Maitland,) for I fear, my love, (addressing Isabella,) it would be unpleasant to you to see her. By no means, (answered she;) I rather esteem myself obliged to her, since had it not been for her, I might never have

have enjoyed the happiness of seeing my dear second mother. I cannot regret the means by which I am made rich in two such maternal friends. Then you are not at all thankful for the happiness of knowing me? (said Mary, with a smile.) Perhaps she knows you too well, Mary, to admit of much gratitude (replied Henry,) in the same vein. It would rather argue what I little suspect in Lady Isabella, want of judgment and observation, (cried Sir Charles;) though if I may depend upon the little I have seen, and the great deal I have heard of Miss Maitland, it is no easy task to discover all her excellencies. Ah, no! Sir Charles, (answered Mary, shaking her head,) my good qualities are easily enumerated; it is my faults that make out the extended list; is it not, Henry? I rather believe (said Isabella,) that your faults are a secret to your brother,

ther, as well as to me; and I must confess I have never had penetration enough to discover them.

Thus mutually pleased, and satisfied with each other, the apparently short evening passed away; and though they did not separate for the night till it grew late, each seemed to rise with reluctance. Mary attended our heroine to her old apartment, which she entered with a pleasure somewhat resembling that we feel upon meeting an old acquaintance after a considerable length of absence. Here they sat down, and began a conversation which lasted till the appearance of day-light gave them notice that morning was far advanced; upon which Mary started up, and embracing Isabella, begged her pardon for intruding so unmercifully upon her hours of rest, and tenderly bidding her adieu, retired to her

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own room, while her fair friend sought and quickly sunk into that repose which is sweetened by virtue and content.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

WHEN breakfast was finished, the morning being one of the finest that autumn could bestow, Isabella, who was impatient to visit some of her favourite haunts, proposed a walk in the shrubbery. Mrs. Maitland, having a week before strained one of her ancles, did not venture to undertake so much, and Lady Belford, who was exceedingly delighted with her society, chose to remain with her in the house. The young people were therefore obliged

obliged to go alone; Sir Charles offered his arm to Mary, as Henry had already done to his Isabella; and they set out with that alacrity and chearfulness, which are the common attendants upon youth, health, goodness, and prosperity.

They had scarce lost sight of the house before Mr. Mordant's coach drove up to the door, out of which alighted Lady Maitland, Mrs. Mordant, her daughter, and Miss Windsor. Mrs. Maitland was a little shocked at the uncommon effrontery of her ladyship, who addressed her in the common forms of salutation, with all the ease of unconscious simplicity; saying, that Sir George had pressed her so much to make one of his party, that she could not resist the pleasure of once more visiting poor Woodburn. Miss Mordant inquired after her dear Miss Maitland, whom, she declared, she excessively longed to see. Miss Windsor admired

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the view from the parlour window, and protested, that Furze Hill appeared to be one of the sweetest little habitations she had ever beheld.

They had not been many minutes seated, before Lady Belford thanked Mrs. Mordant for her direction to the Grove. This introduced the subject of Juliana's supposed situation, though both she and Lady Maitland appeared unwilling to enter into it. On the contrary, Miss Windsor seemed delighted with an opportunity of speaking her sentiments. Mrs. Mordant having expressed much concern for her future welfare, she said, that certainly she was to be pitied: though really (continued she) I was not much surprized at the discovery of her birth. I allow she is handsome, but she wants that something which distinguishes the woman of condition. This deficiency (replied Mrs. Mordant) was never discovered till
now,

now, Miss Windfor; nor do I believe, that you would even yet have observed it, had it not been pointed out by the unfortunate change in her situation. She was and still is a charming young woman, and the general admiration she excited wherever she appeared, proves that she was so. Yes, (rejoined Mrs. Maitland) it does as much honour to her charms and accomplishments, as the indifference with which she received it does to her understanding. I am sincerely glad, (said Mrs. Mordant) that the poor thing has been so fortunate as to acquire such a friend in your ladyship, (addressing Lady Belford;) one who has both generosity and power to be such. I really think, (said Miss Windfor) that she's extremely well calculated for a companion; and, considering her real birth, she ought to be perfectly content, and think herself very happy in such a condition. Her real birth, (re-

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plied

plied Lady Belford) is, I find, still unknown to you, as well as to these ladies. Then turning to Mrs. Mordant, You, madam, (said she) who have judgment enough to perceive, and candour to admire and acknowledge the fine qualities of the dear creature of whom we are speaking, will be pleased to hear, that instead of a poor unfriended girl, without fortune, family, or connection, she is discovered to be the only daughter and heiress of the late Earl of Belford; and that he has acknowledged her for such, and bequeathed to her the largest part of his great fortune. Surprise sat upon the countenance of Mrs. Mordant, envy and disgust upon that of her daughter, and a malignant smile of incredulity upon those of Lady Maitland and Miss Windsor.

After the pause of a moment, I should not wonder at any thing Lord Belford

Belford has done for Miss Martin—Henley—Jones—What am I to call her? (cried Miss Windfor.) If he can persuade the world to believe that she is his daughter, and has left her enough to support the title, she is really very fortunate: but I never heard of his marriage: methinks before he produced his daughter, he should have introduced us to Lady Belford. That she will herself do, (answered her ladyship:) the name and title she once shrunk to hear pronounced, she now glories in bearing, as the mother of one of the loveliest women in the kingdom.

Had Lady Belford followed the impulse of her feelings, resentment would have kept her silent; but she could not endure, that a doubt should remain in the breast of even the most worthless or insignificant, concerning circumstances in which one she so fondly loved was interested. She therefore conde-

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scended, addressing Mrs. Mordant, to give a brief but full account of the whole affair; concluding with a warm acknowledgment of her obligations to Mrs. Maitland, for the tender and most judicious manner in which her daughter had been treated and educated.

Mrs. Mordant expressed real satisfaction at the extraordinary account she had heard: the rest of the party were silent, but their looks declared, that envy rather than wonder closed their lips. In this state were they sitting, when the party who had gone out to walk, passed by the window in their return, having been joined in the shrubbery by Sir George Maitland, Sir Harry Windsor, and Albert Mordant. Upon their entrance, Lady Belford took the hand of her daughter, and leading her up to Mrs. Mordant, Permit me, (said she) to introduce my daughter to you in her new character,
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and to hope, that the kindness you expressed to Miss Maitland, will be extended to Lady Isabella Villars. Mrs. Mordant felicitated our heroine upon the happy discovery she had made, in the most obliging and friendly manner. Her daughter and Miss Windsor endeavoured to follow her example, but it was done with visible chagrin, though at the same time they shewed a mean admiration of her title, which her virtues never could command. As for Lady Maitland, she preserved the most unaltered indifference of countenance, and congratulated Lady Isabella in the same usual form of words, which she would have made use of in addressing any other person upon a similar occasion.

The gentlemen did not appear strangers to the affair; Henry having, in order to avoid perplexity and confusion, informed his brother, in a short letter, (which he received after the ladies

were set out for Furze Hill) of such particulars as he wished him to be acquainted with. Sir George, who was not displeased to find that his younger brother was likely to be so largely provided for, and the family aggrandized by an alliance with one so ancient and noble as that of Villars, behaved both to Lady Isabella and her mother with great attention and politeness, and upon taking leave, requested the honour of their company, together with that of Sir Charles Hastings, and his mother and sister, to spend the next day at Woodburn.

The engagement was accordingly made, and fulfilled. Mr. and Mrs. Burnet were invited to meet them, a splendid entertainment prepared, and every thing done by the young baronet that could render the visit pleasant. The first awkwardness of envy being a little worn off, Lady Isabella found herself

herself courted and careffed by every one: but though politeness induced her to return civility for civility, it was easy to perceive, that she inwardly despised the mean homage paid, not to herself, but to her situation in life; which, had it been possessed by an idiot, would equally have claimed such vulgar adulation.

During a month one agreeable party succeeded another, and every day appeared to the happy inhabitants of Furze-Hill shorter than the preceding one. Sir Charles entirely forgot his intended tour, a circumstance which was observed with much pleasure by Lady Belford. He seemed wholly to have regained his ease of mind, and to have relinquished the false principle which had been the source of all his errors. His growing attachment to Mary was visible to every one, and the obliging return she always made to his
 attentions,

attentions, gave them hopes that it would be fortunate. Lady Belford, who was become nearly as fond of her as she was of Isabella, was extremely anxious for his success, often telling her daughter, that if he was again disappointed, it would entirely unsettle his plan of life.

Her fears were, however, happily removed, when about a week before the time fixed for the marriage of Henry and Isabella, he formally requested Mrs. Maitland's consent to his own and her daughter's; having previously obtained that of his mistress, provided her mother made no objection to the engagement. This completed the happiness of all, and preparations of every kind were made with a celerity, which proved that those on whom it depended to hasten them were deeply interested in their event.

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The new house which Lord Belford had purchased, was fixed upon for the residence of Mr. Maitland and his lady, which they chose in preference to a very handsome family mansion that was upon one of their estates, on account of its vicinity to Marley, and being but an easy day's journey from Furze-Hill.

The two new married couples, together with Lady Belford, Mrs. Maitland and her family, set out upon the day of their marriage for Clareville; where they continued till the winter was far advanced, when they came for a few months to town, the amusements of which were almost wholly new to the brides. Wherever they appeared, they were followed by general admiration; flattery addressed them in its softest tones, and fashion conformed itself to their fancy; but their hearts felt the insufficiency of such empty pleasures

pleasures to satisfy their affections. Retiring from the unmeaning bustle of a noisy world, they sought that social retirement which is the nurse and preserver of virtue, and found that happiness which flies the public haunts of folly and dissipation, in the bosom of duty, love, and friendship.

Our readers will doubtless expect to hear something more of the principal persons we have introduced to his acquaintance in the course of this history, and as it is our wish to afford him every possible satisfaction, we must inform him, that some months after the marriage of Mr. Maitland, Sir George was united to Miss Mordant, not so much, as the world believes, from motives of particular affection as a kind of necessity, having entangled himself in a half address, which raising an expectation in the family with whom he was upon terms of so much intimacy,
that

that he found himself obliged to fulfil them. They live like the generality of people in their situation of life. Vanity is the ruling, if not the only passion of both, but as neither of them are possessed of much vivacity or imagination, they are content to gratify it in the beaten track, by living as the rest of the world do.

Sir Harry Windfor and his sister continue single; he is still intirely governed by her, and makes it his study to indulge and please her in every thing, but her temper is become intolerable to every body else. Her insolence being increased to an inconceivable degree, and in proportion as her hope of making conquests lessens, her aversion to the young and beautiful of her own sex gathers strength, and many cruel and false reports, which have been circulated to the disadvantage of such, have been traced back to her as their inventor

ventor and propagator. On this account her society is much shunned by persons of this description; her house is a solitude, and most of the civility she receives in public is the effect of fear.

Lady Maitland still continues to live in the family of Mr. Mordant, where she is esteemed a kind of necessary evil. As the increasing wrinkles of age, rendered more visible as well as more numerous by the cosmetics and paints she had so long made use of, will not longer allow her the smallest pretensions to beauty, the card-table is in great measure substituted for the toilet, tho' she is still passionately fond of dress, and has neither laid aside her rouge or pearl powder.

Lady Belford and Mrs. Maitland continue to reside at their respective houses; but such is the friendship which subsists between them, that they every year

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pay each other a visit of the most agreeable kind; at which time, for the period is fixed, their children make a point of joining them. Mrs. Williams is, at Lady Belford's particular request, gone to live with her, and Mrs. Clements still remains with her niece.

Free from the follies of a trifling dissipated age, and possessed of virtues which insure her own, and contribute to the satisfaction and comfort of all around her, our heroine continues a pattern of every thing that is amiable and worthy: her life is a continued succession of actions that are worthy of her nature, and the characters of daughter, wife, mother, friend, and patroness, are by her supported, not with mere cold propriety, but with the steadiness of principle, and the vivacity of affection.

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" She who has that, is clad in complete steel,
" And like a quiver'd nymph with arrows keen,
" May trace huge forests and unharbour'd heaths,
" Infamous hills, and sandy perilous wilds;
" Yea, there, where very desolation dwells,
" She may pass with unsullied Majesty."

MONTHLY REVIEW.

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